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The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	5199
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	5199
162-18(3) – Community Involvement – On the Land (R. McLeod).....	5199
163-18(3) – Minister Absent from the House (B. McLeod).....	5199
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS.....	5200
Federal Support for Northern Mineral Resource Development (Vanthuyne).....	5200
Recognition of Chef Rich Francis (Blake)	5200
Eulogy for David Bonnetrouge (Nadli)	5201
Northwest Territories Manufacturing Strategy (Green)	5201
Building the Knowledge Economy with Hotii ts'eeda (O'Reilly)	5201
Ministerial Directive on Enrolment of Students in French Language Education Programs (Testart).....	5202
Eulogy for Alex Hall (Sebert).....	5202
Eulogy for Albert Norwegian (Thompson)	5203
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	5204
ORAL QUESTIONS.....	5204
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS	5212
NOTICES OF MOTION.....	5213
Motion 34-18(3) – Referral of 2018 Review of Members' Compensation and Benefits Report to Committee of the Whole	5213
NOTICES OF MOTION FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS	5213
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS.....	5213
REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE	5239
ORDERS OF THE DAY	5239

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Tuesday, March 5, 2019****Members Present**

Hon. Glen Abernethy, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Blake, Hon. Caroline Cochrane, Ms. Julie Green, Hon. Jackson Lafferty, Hon. Bob McLeod, Hon. Robert McLeod, Mr. McNeely, Hon. Alfred Moses, Mr. Nadli, Mr. Nakimayak, Mr. O'Reilly, Hon. Wally Schumann, Hon. Louis Sebert, Mr. Simpson, Mr. Testart, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Vanthuyne

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackson Lafferty): Good afternoon, Members. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 162-18(3):
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT – ON THE LAND

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The land, water, air, wildlife, and plants of the Northwest Territories play a critical role in the lives of Northerners. They are part of our heritage, identity, and way of life. They provide for us in many ways as food for our families, traditional clothing, and transportation routes. The land sustains our livelihoods through hunting, trapping, and gathering. It is a basis for our arts and culture.

The Government of the Northwest Territories has made a mandate commitment to develop country food programming, as well as enhance existing programming and build new partnership initiatives to support healthy and sustainable traditional lifestyles. Together, we work continuously to support our residents' ability to go out on the land.

Mr. Speaker, in an effort to meet this commitment, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources recently established a new On the Land Unit to address the needs and challenges of our communities regarding land-based activities.

We have heard from our residents about the unique needs and challenges faced by communities in accessing country foods, sustaining a vibrant traditional economy, and maintaining opportunities for land-based learning that involves elders and youth.

Our new On the Land Unit is working to address these important issues by engaging our Indigenous partners, communities, land-users, renewable resource boards, and other stakeholders to discuss

and prioritize ways to support community-driven sustainable livelihoods programs and initiatives.

Starting this month, representatives from the department will be holding open houses in communities across the territory to get input on the challenges, needs, opportunities, and priorities linked to country foods, the traditional economy, land-based learning, Guardian programs, and traditional knowledge.

The information gathered through this public engagement process will be used to shape an ENR action plan for supporting sustainable livelihoods, and help us as a government to better ensure traditional knowledge directly informs our decision-making.

Mr. Speaker, our new On the Land Unit will also oversee the existing program that we have been partnering on successfully with communities for many years, including the Take a Kid Trapping Program, the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Program, our Community Harvesters Assistance Program, hunter education and training, and public education and outreach initiatives, to name a few.

Ongoing education and outreach, community engagement, and support for community-driven research are fundamental to the department and our collaboration with our partners. The new On the Land Unit represents the strong commitment ENR has to supporting programs and services that position northern knowledge, livelihoods, and culture as central to the work we do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. The Honourable Premier.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 163-18(3):
MINISTER ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Glen Abernethy will be absent from the House today and tomorrow due to a personal matter.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Item 4, Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife North.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FEDERAL SUPPORT FOR NORTHERN MINERAL RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Members might get tired of hearing me talk about the importance of mineral development to our economy, but I'll risk it.

Mineral resource development is truly a pan-Canadian industry, but it's significant to the North. Exploration and mining is the North's largest private sector employer and largest employer of Indigenous people, creating about one in every six jobs. Mining exceeds 20 percent of our GDP and brings in investments in the billions of dollars. Mining is also the largest private-sector partner of Indigenous businesses, so it's not only strengthening the NWT economy, it specifically supports Indigenous economic prosperity.

It was good to see this week when the federal government released the Canadian Minerals and Metals Plan, or CMMP. The CMMP will guide Canada's mineral resource sector, focusing on areas like global competitiveness, advancing Indigenous participation, environmental protection, and incorporating leading science and innovation into the industry.

Industry recognizes that much of its future growth will be made in remote and northern areas, but creating an operational mine requires a huge investment, Mr. Speaker, and even more so in the north. An industry study found that, because of the "infrastructure deficit," a mine in the north costs about two-and-a-half times as much to develop as in southern Canada.

Mr. Speaker, in days when investor confidence is soft, dealing with that infrastructure deficit is an important priority. We have to demonstrate that we're serious about growing the economy, and that means encouraging Ottawa to play its part in reducing our cost of doing business.

We need less expensive, and green, power. We need transportation routes to reduce the cost of essential goods in our communities, as well as to provide access to our resources. We need to increase our efforts to manage, and not contribute to, a rising cost of living.

Mr. Speaker, we've been demanding that the federal government act to help reduce the infrastructure deficit with large-scale investment. Yesterday's announcement of over \$5 million in funding for the Slave Geological Province project is welcome news, and the new CMMP highlights

priority areas that will be good for the North, our economy, and jobs for Northerners.

Mr. Speaker, even though it's an election year, we need to hold Ottawa to its commitments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Colleagues, I would like to draw your attention to visitors in the gallery today with us. I am pleased to recognize interns from the Library of Parliament. They are here in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, to increase their knowledge of the different Canadian parliamentary systems, such as our consensus-style government, and to gain experience in policy, in our legislative process, and in public education as it relates to library research. Along with their supervisor here with us, Lalita Acharya -- I might have pronounced it differently -- Sarah Allan, Roxanne Brisson, Jorge Luis Flores, Andres Leon, and Robert Mason. Masi for joining us here. Welcome to the Northwest Territories.

Colleagues, with us, we have some students here. I do recognize some faces over the weekend. They had a basketball tournament, as well. Grade 9 class from Ecole St. Pat's High School. Welcome to our Assembly.

Members' statements. Member for Mackenzie Delta.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RECOGNITION OF CHEF RICH FRANCIS

MR. BLAKE: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. This week, the Gwich'in have been welcoming and celebrating one of their own.

Chef Rich Francis has made his way home to Fort McPherson. A brief history on our chef. Rich's mother is from the Six Nations of Ontario. His father is Tetlit Gwich'in from Fort McPherson.

Rich graduated from the acclaimed Stratford Chefs' School in Stratford, Ontario, finishing at the top of his class and receiving the institute's award for culinary excellence.

Mr. Speaker, Rich was one of the finalists and only First Nations competitor on Season 4 of Top Chef Canada.

An article written of Rich Francis states: "Rich is literally on fire in the Indigenous culinary world. He has won honours for his approach to native foods and Indigenous ingredients that revitalize food and culture."

Through his work as a chef, he has addressed issues that affect First Nations as a whole, such as truth and reconciliation, colonization, diabetes, obesity, and food sovereignty, just to name a few.

Mr. Speaker, this week Rich has travelled to Tsiigehtchic and Fort McPherson where he was in the schools teaching students basic cooking skills. He is in Inuvik all this week, where the traditional games are happening. We are very honoured to have Rich in the region. Welcome home, Chef. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Members' statements. Member for Deh Cho.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
EULOGY FOR DAVID BONNETROUGE

MR. NADLI: [English translation not provided]

Mr. Speaker, David was a beloved dad, brother, uncle, and friend. He passed away on October 26, 2015, at the age of 77.

David's daughter Ruby says that her dad loved playing fiddle, especially playing with Johnny Landry, Alberta Canadian, and the boys. He also taught fiddle to young men in the community, and was teaching his granddaughter, Jody, too.

Mr. Speaker, music was very important to David. He didn't play to be famous. He just loved to play fiddle, and to sing and dance, and he loved talent shows. Whenever there was a talent show or other performance, David performed his very best, from when he was a young man to the last time he played with Johnny Landry at a show in March 2015. That's how his family wants to remember him.

Mr. Speaker, members of the community, led by Loretta Landry and with some help from the Dehcho Bison Jamboree Carnival Committee, they are organizing a talent show in his honour. There will be a youth competition on March 22nd, with prizes for singing, fiddling, and couples jigging, as well as door prizes and other musical performances, and memorial buttons are being sold as a fundraiser.

Mr. Speaker, I hope you and my colleagues will join me in recognizing the life of David Bonnetrouge, and the strength of the community he left behind. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES MANUFACTURING
STRATEGY

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The manufacturing sector is one of the bright lights of the NWT economy. It more than doubled in value from 2014 to 2016 and directly employed 129 people. Let's hope that number has grown as much

between 2016 and 2018, despite the fact the sector is still waiting for the government's long-awaited manufacturing strategy. The mandate commitment for manufacturing speaks to expanding the sector, identifying potential areas of growth, promoting and marketing products manufactured in the NWT, and aiding in the professional and technological advancement of the industry. What we need is a detailed plan.

Mr. Speaker, last year, I had the pleasure of travelling to Iceland. I toured a small-scale enterprise called Atlantic Leather. Fishing is big business in Iceland, and for the last 20 years, Atlantic Leather has been buying fish skins from local fish plants. During a three- to four-week process, the skin is cleaned, cured, and dyed every colour of the rainbow. Each skin is uniquely beautiful, with the pattern and texture of the fish clearly visible through the colour. The end result is soft and supple leather that is as sturdy as lamb leather. It is made into ties, buttons, purses, shoes, and other things. The factory sells these goods to tourists, but the biggest market is with the luxury-goods manufacturers such as Prada, Jimmy Choo, Fendi, and Dior.

Mr. Speaker, Atlantic Leather prides itself on its sustainability. All of the material used is a by-product from other industries, such as the food industry. They say the chemicals used in the tannery are as sustainable and environmentally friendly as they can get. As a bonus, the tannery has become a novelty stop for tourists. The staff conduct tours and describe the process of creating the leather. A small shop sells both the leather and the finished goods that they make to both tourists and locals.

Mr. Speaker, our fisheries industry produces a lot of skins, and we could investigate their use for leather, as well. What happens to fish skins that come from the lake now? They are thrown away. Instead, given some business development assistance, it may be possible to create a market for fish leather products.

Mr. Speaker, this is the kind of innovation I am hoping for in the long-awaited manufacturing strategy. I will have questions for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Member for Frame Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
BUILDING THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY WITH
HOTII TS'EEDA

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. On January 18th, the Standing Committee on Social Development heard a very interesting presentation

from representatives of the NWT Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research Unit, otherwise known as Hotii ts'eeda, which is hosted by the Tlicho Government. Their vision is to support health, research, and training that is rooted in Dene Naowo, Inuvialuit, and Metis knowledge and responds to the needs of patients, communities, and governments.

Hotii ts'eeda recently released a very interesting discussion paper on building a knowledge economy. I strongly support this initiative. I urge our government to adopt this approach wholeheartedly and make it priority. In the view of Hotii ts'eeda, the knowledge economy is using knowledge to innovate, solve problems, create jobs and value. The discussion paper sets out the following principles and ideas:

- Ensure legislation, regulations, and policy makes researchers feel valued and empowered to work in the NWT to undertake research that will result in improving the lives of residents.
- Legislation, regulations, and policy should create an environment where Indigenous peoples have control of research being done on their lands and with their people.
- Research with Indigenous peoples should provide economic benefits primarily to NWT residents and communities. Indigenous governments and research institutes should have a primary role in creating a sustainable knowledge economy.
- GNWT should request information from researchers that will enable us to measure the social and economic impacts and outcomes in the Northwest Territories.
- The polytechnic university should be positioned and built as a catalyst for increasing research funding and innovations in the Northwest Territories.
- Each government department needs to put in place processes for the review and approval of research proposals and to help leverage external research funds.
- Develop science communications and knowledge translation capacity with appropriate funding and support.

I will have questions for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, who has the lead for this government on the knowledge economy, later today. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Member for Kam Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MINISTERIAL DIRECTIVE ON ENROLMENT OF STUDENTS IN FRENCH LANGUAGE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to address several concerns which have been raised by my constituents and francophone stakeholders on the matter of the Ministerial Directive Enrolment of Students in French Language Education Programs. Here in the NWT we are left with a hangover from the time before responsible government, a ministerial directive and direct ministerial oversight of French language admissions process. This only exists in the three northern territories. Every other jurisdiction in Canada has devolved these responsibilities to arm's-length organizations and done away with what is in effect a colonial legacy, treating francophone families different than their anglophone counterparts.

Mr. Speaker, all Northerners ought to have a fair and equal access to education in the Northwest Territories, and this mandatory oversight by the Minister over admissions is unnecessary busy work at the ministerial level and for the public service. The Commission scolaire has the ability to internally manage this process of student admission. I am curious as to why we here in the NWT require such direct control by the Minister over only a select portion of our public education system.

The goal of supporting language and culture revitalization is an important one for all of our official languages. This goes without question. Sadly, this ministerial directive is an unnecessary public policy decision that limits the opportunities of the Commission scolaire to thrive and adapt to the ever-changing demographics and needs of Northerners.

The francophone community is a proud part of our heritage and enriches our culture. I am saddened that the advice of the francophone stakeholders in our communities on how to improve the directive has not been taken up by the current Minister or the Minister's predecessor. Later today, I will have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment on the Ministerial Directive for Enrolment and how this government can improve access to francophone education in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Member for Thebacha.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EULOGY FOR ALEX HALL

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, people in Fort Smith, throughout the Northwest Territories, and beyond our borders were saddened to hear of the recent passing of long-time Fort Smith resident, Alex Hall.

Alex was born and raised in Ontario and began canoeing as a boy. Educated as a wildlife biologist, he received a Master's degree in Animal Ecology from the University of Toronto. In 1974, Alex established Canoe Arctic, an eco-tourist/travel business based in Fort Smith, which he ran for more than 40 years, taking adventurous tourists on canoeing expeditions along the Thelon River and other tundra and Barren Lands rivers.

Accomplishments and awards in his career include:

- In 2002, he was a runner-up for the Arctic Award, an international award administered by the World Wildlife Fund for linking tourism and conservation.
- Alex authored a number of magazine articles. He also wrote a book on the Barren Lands entitled "Discovering Eden: A Lifetime of Paddling Arctic Rivers." The Globe and Mail included Discovering Eden among its year-end list of the top 100 books published in Canada in 2003.
- In 2004, he was presented with a lifetime achievement award for his impact on the development of the tourist industry in the Northwest Territories and for his conservation work in connection with the Thelon Wildlife Sanctuary.
- In 2007, National Geographic Adventure chose Canoe Arctic's canoe trips in the Canadian Arctic as one of its "Top Destinations for 2007 and Beyond."
- As recently as last fall, Alex was honoured at the NWT Tourism AGM for his contributions.

Mr. Speaker, I was honoured to know this extraordinary man, whose contributions to conservation and tourism in the North will be an enduring legacy. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Our condolences to the family, and also to the community, as well. Members' statements. Member for Nahendeh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EULOGY FOR ALBERT NORWEGIAN

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Albert George Norwegian left behind an incredible legacy of family, humour, love, and friendship.

Albert was born on December 21, 1933, at Rabbitskin, Deh Cho. This was during the time of the Mad Trapper of Rat River story. His mother was carrying him at this time. Albert's life began with this adventure, and he and his family talked about the story of his mom worrying about the Mad Trapper coming to Rabbitskin.

Albert was the last son of Joseph and Elizabeth Norwegian to pass away. Albert lived in Fort Providence when he passed away.

Albert possessed an incredible work ethic. His life motto was: "Always teach yourself to win a little bit all the time." A perfect example of this was when he carried a 400-pound motor from the creek to the cabin. Once he got to the top of the hill, there was blood coming from his shoulder, but he did it.

Albert was not educated in the modern way. However, he was self-taught and extremely educated in traditional culture and teachings. Due to his incredible work ethic, Albert was very successful. He was extremely inquisitive and industrious. Even with his limited ability to read and write, he trained himself and was motivated to do well, and he did.

Albert's celebration of life depicted his incredible sense of humour. Right to the end, he was true to himself, always focused on the lighter side of life. He loved to laugh and make jokes. Even when he was near the end, he would close his eyes for about five minutes, and then he would open his eyes and at the same time say, "Boo," at his family members who were sitting with him.

Even as his life came to an end, Albert maintained his humour and was actively joking with his family. His daughters and sons shared how he departed onto the next journey on his own terms.

As Albert was nearing the end of his journey, laying on his hospital bed in Edmonton, all of the wrinkles on his face disappeared. All at once, he stopped breathing on February 21, 2019. Embraced by his family, softly, silently, the eagle flew back to Rabbitskin.

Albert is survived by his two sisters, six daughters, six sons, and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The Gargan and the Norwegian families would like to thank everybody for their loving support and prayers during their time of sorrow.

Mr. Speaker, Albert George Norwegian will be sadly missed and never forgotten.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Our condolences to the family and to the community, as well. Members' statements. Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Item

6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Yellowknife North.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize the students from grade nine at St. Patrick's, my junior high alma mater, located in the riding of Yellowknife North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we missed anyone in the gallery, thanks for being here with us. It is always great to have an audience as part of our proceedings. Masi. Item 7, acknowledgements. Item 8, oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 642-18(3): ACADEMIC UPGRADING FOR ADULT LEARNERS

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the NWT and, in particular, the Nahendeh, many residents require academic upgrading, even after finishing school. My questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment: how is the department working with Aurora College to meet the needs of adult learners in the region? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are two ways to meet the needs of adult learners that can be done. If people are looking to do upgrading, they can do that, actually, by addressing their home community school. Often they will take students who are over 21. That is common within the smaller communities. As well, within community learning centres, we try to upgrade their credentials. Through Aurora College specifically, we offer two upgradings. One is through the Occupations and College Access Program, and the other one is the University and College Access Program. Those are two that pertain specifically to the college administering them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. THOMPSON: I am looking more specifically at the small communities in the Nahendeh, so again, could the Minister tell us: could existing schools be used to deliver upgrading where there is no community learning centre available?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Yes, definitely. Schools can actually offer upgrading if they have the capacity to do so. Some of the schools don't

have the higher learning grades. That has been addressed over the years with the Northern Distance Learning. There is funding, actually, to provide through schools if they want to address the higher grades, 10, 11, and 12. There is funding through Education to provide for that. We do try to support students as much as possible, and using the existing schools, as well as community learning centres, is something that we need to do as much as possible.

MR. THOMPSON: It's great to talk about learning centres, but if we don't have them in the small communities, it doesn't really help. Could the Minister advise: in the future, will learning centres be expanded into these small communities and all communities in the Northwest Territories?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: The community learning centres is an area that I can't, right at this point, say is going to be expanded into all communities. Right now, they are offered in 21 of the communities. We need to do a whole review of the community learning centres, and not only on where they are. That is something that I could commit to looking at, where they are located, but also the services that they are providing within that. That is part of the polytechnic review, the process that we are working on, so we are a little bit ahead of the game today to say that we will expand it when we are trying to figure out what exactly we are doing and how we can strengthen those community learning centres today.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and again, I would like to thank the Minister for the information provided here today. At the end of the day, though, we want to help our students who are graduating. This is my understanding: students attending access programs at Aurora College are able to access student financial assistance. This is counted against the maximum allowable semesters limit under SFA. Can the Minister explain why this is, and has ECE considered not counting these access programs against the student's maximum allowable limit of SFA? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Currently, the Education Act actually does define what can be provided through student financial assistance. It is legislated, so it is difficult. We need to look at it and actually change the legislation, which is a lot more difficult than changing policies. Will we look at it? Absolutely. It is part of the process that we need to look at within the college. The difference, though, is that normal upgrading courses can be addressed within their communities, through schools and the community learning centres, which we only have 21 of, I recognize.

The access programs, really, are not a general upgrading where you get grade 12. The access programs are really looking at the programs that you need to get into college or university, so it is a different type of upgrading. I do have concerns with it, as well, and so I have stated that we will be looking at it as we move forward with the whole polytechnic university and how we are providing services to the public. I think it is an area that needs to be looked at. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Colleagues, for visitors in the gallery, as well, I forgot to mention Gerry Burla, who is with us here today. He is also part of the Legislative Librarians here at the Legislative Assembly. Welcome to our Assembly. Masi. Oral questions. Member for Hay River North.

QUESTION 643-18(3):
MAINTAINING ROADSIDE REST AREAS

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not particularly like Facebook. There is too much gossip and negativity on there for my liking, but I check it so that I can keep abreast of what is going on around town and in the Northwest Territories. However, Mr. Speaker, after this week, I might have to swear off Facebook for good. When I opened it up the other day, the first thing in my feed was a picture of the inside of the outhouse at the GNWT-owned north-of-60 visitors centre. It was not pretty, and I will spare everyone the gruesome details.

This has come up before. I have seen articles in the News/North about it. I know that other Members have asked questions about it. This is a perennial issue. It goes on and on for years, particularly at the border when the ice roads are in and all of the big trucks start coming from the south. It is where the truckers stop, and, you know, they don't take it easy on that bathroom, Mr. Speaker, and it is not a great way to introduce visitors to the Northwest Territories. I have some questions for the Minister of ITI on this.

I apologize to the Pages who came here hoping to see some political discourse, and I'm talking about outhouses, but that is the way it is sometimes. I have to ask the Minister: how are ITI's roadside outhouses maintained during the winter months? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unlike the summer park season, when we have contractors who look after these facilities on a daily basis, in the wintertime, we send our contractor out once a month to look after these facilities. Then, when conditions like this happen, of

course, we dispatch the contractor out there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SIMPSON: Once a month just isn't enough. As you know, it is winter, it is cold, things freeze, and they pile up, and I am not quite sure how they are going to deal with this. What is going to be done in the short term to fix this situation and ensure that these outhouses are kept clean this winter?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: I can reassure the Member that we have already sent a contractor out there to clean this up. This has come up in this Assembly every year at this time of year, and we have to make it quite clear. This is a difficult situation for us. These things are isolated and remote. There is no power at these locations, and we spend a significant amount of money on this. We spend roughly \$50,000 annually to clean these things up in the off-season, and we could probably spend that a week, if we had to really get after this thing, but we don't have the money to do this. The department is certainly going to be having a look at what we need to do. We are doing a review right now of our strategic plan on parks, and I am sure that this is going to be a topic of discussion.

MR. SIMPSON: It sounds like there is a review happening. There will probably be a report that comes out of it; maybe an action plan, maybe a framework, who knows? This has been ongoing for years and years and years, so there must be some sort of plan. I know that there are some bright people working in that department, so what is the long-term plan to ensure that these outhouses remain clean?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: As I have said, we have sent someone out there to clean out this facility right now, and the Member is clearly right. We have 8,000 loads going to the mine site this year, so there are 16,000 extra trucks of traffic going just past that facility alone. Just think about that, if that was your washroom, the amount of toilet paper you have to supply.

We are looking at this thing. This is clearly an issue that is not going to go away unless we do something about it, but as I said, these things are located in locations where there is no access to power. We have to have a serious look at how we are going to be able to rectify this problem. Do we put in rotating porta-potties? Do we look at some type of antifreeze? Do we put bigger tanks in there? Is propane heat an option? These are the types of things that we are going to have to have a look at, or maybe, in this particular case, if Members really get on side and really push and help me access some funding from the Finance Minister, maybe we run a power line from the Alberta section to the border.

Certainly, with help of committee and the Members across the House, we can maybe rectify this problem, but we are looking at all of these alternatives. As I have said, we are working on our winter strategy and what we are going to do. This is going to be a conversation, not with just this facility, but with a number of facilities, and it is a challenging thing.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Hay River North.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I understand the challenge. There is not even cell service out at the border. There is no power; there is no heat; there are no gas lines. I know that, in Alberta, they have gas lines, they have power, and so they have nice heated washrooms and don't run into these issues. Has the Minister put together an estimate on how much it would cost to install some heated washrooms or some type of infrastructure to avoid this? Do we have numbers that I can at least bring back to my constituents? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Roughly, from the department's numbers that I got from them, it costs \$70,000 to construct just a regular outhouse. I suspect, for us to do a heated facility, as we have talked about in this House here and the challenges in the location that it is, it would probably be double that. We would be spending something like \$140,000, not counting to run power out to this type of facility. We will work through this through our winter strategy and try to come up with something here before next winter about how we can try to rectify this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Kam Lake.

QUESTION 644-18(3):
MINISTERIAL DIRECTIVE ON ENROLMENT OF
STUDENTS IN FRENCH LANGUAGE
EDUCATION PROGRAMS

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today, I spoke of the directive for the enrolment of students in French language education programs, which, I would submit, is a hangover from a previous time when Ottawa was calling the shots. This seems to be only present in the three territories. Can the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment give us a compelling reason why this is important public policy that must be maintained? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With only having a few minutes to think on

my feet what the question is, I guess the first thing that pops into my head as a compelling argument is that we only have two schools in the whole of the Northwest Territories that offer French immersion as a language. That is Hay River and in Yellowknife, and we have to make sure that the numbers don't go over 85 percent, otherwise we are looking at new schools, and we don't have enough money to add more schools, other than what we already have in our current plan. I guess, thinking on my feet, the first argument that comes to my head is making sure that it doesn't go over the 85 percent capacity, which is when we have to ensure that we are looking at new builds. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TESTART: Does the Minister have the current enrolment numbers? Are we close to 85 percent? Is this a live concern that there are students, you know, waiting to flood the francophone schools and completely overwhelm the current capacity?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: As stated, I didn't get any of those questions beforehand, so no, I do not have the enrolment of the French schools on hand at this moment. We do have 49 schools in the Northwest Territories. It is impossible for me to try to memorize those all and bring them up with advanced notice. Therefore, I cannot say where we stay close to the 85 percent.

MR. TESTART: I have some sympathy for what the Minister has just provided to the House, except that there are only two schools, one school board, that requires Ministerial approval of enrolment. I would hope that she is a bit more in touch with the numbers on this file. Will the Minister commit to reviewing this policy again and, this time, to listening with francophone stakeholders, which was not done the last time? There are major concerns left with this policy. Is the Minister open to another review of the enrolment directive?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I do know that there are only two French language schools, but there are also 47 other schools that I am also responsible for, so it is something that I have to make sure that I spread my ability throughout. As for looking at it right now, if that was brought to me, actually, when I first started in April or two years ago, before it was my portfolio, I would have considered it, but we have six months left, and it is in the legislation. It is inappropriate at this time to start looking at that. We just don't have the time in this Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Kam Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe the Minister is incorrect. This is government policy; it is not a legislative change that would be required.

This is something that she could change right away, so I will ask now if the Minister will consider getting rid of this policy altogether? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Again, because we only have six months left, I have a lot of priorities, and I hate to say that. I mean, it is not that I don't want to work with them. I think it is important to build the relationship and work closely with the francophone community. However, I have a polytechnic on my hands right now. I have new initiatives with the secondary school. I have childcare issues. I have income support issues. How far can I stretch myself in six months and make sure that everything is done to the best of my ability? At this point, no. I think that I will continue to maintain the relationship and build on the relationship with the francophone community, but it is something that should be brought forward in the new Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 645-18(3):
FEDERAL SUPPORT FOR NORTHERN MINERAL
RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, my questions are for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Earlier today I spoke about the federal government announcing their new Canadian Minerals and Metals Plan, and I would just like to start by asking the Minister: we are aware that he attended PDAC recently, and so I am wondering if he can enlighten us a little bit about the conference and, more in particular, about the announcement of the new Canadian Minerals and Metals Plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly can update the House on our trip. I just got back this morning. PDAC, again, was another great success for the Government of the Northwest Territories, and a big thank you out to all of our staff who are down there still attending for the next couple of days to help educate people and promote the Northwest Territories. I was there, along with Minister Sohi and Parliamentary Secretary Lefebvre, to announce the Canadian Minerals and Metals Plan, and when we announced it, we had a large turnout, a contingent of people who were there, who were very supportive of the plan that we have been working on as Ministers for the last year.

A little bit of a history on this plan: this all actually started going back as far as 1994, when representatives from the federal, provincial, and

territorial governments signed the Whitehorse Mining Initiative, so that is where this thing actually started.

When we introduced this thing yesterday on the floor of the conference there, it was well-received. What this thing is going to do is it is going to set the stage for the Canadian government to work together to build a competitive, sustainable, and responsible industry for the Canadian Minerals and Metals Plan. It is clearly a document that is shared by all provinces and territories. We all worked on it together. It is a valuable document needed to anchor the minerals and metal and mining industry in the Canadian economy. It clearly states that. We are all very supportive of the plan going forward. It clearly lays out in this plan, and the whole conference, actually, speaks to a number of things about this, and it goes to the Member's comments in his Member's statement today about the source of employment and business growth and opportunities for all Canadians and Indigenous people and Indigenous corporations across this country. We clearly say that we have to have a modern regulatory regime and new technologies to ensure safety and responsible mining in this country. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you to the Minister for his reply. I appreciate a little bit of the update from PDAC. We have done significant work in the North here with regard to our own efforts in support of mineral resource development. We have developed our own mineral strategy. We are also in the midst of developing our Mineral Resources Act. Can the Minister share with us a little bit about how he feels this new Canadian Minerals and Metals Plan will align with the efforts that we have undertaken, in particular, our mineral strategy and our Mineral Resources Act?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Our staff clearly worked on this with all of the staff right across the country. It is clearly lined up with what we are trying to do in the Northwest Territories, and when I am out there speaking on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories and the residents, particularly around the mineral sector, we are pretty much a leader on a lot of stuff in this country. Our new Mineral Resources Act is going to be something that is not seen anywhere else in this country. Our government predecessors to our Assembly came forth with the resource revenue sharing, which is clearly not adopted by all the people in this country. I think that we are the only jurisdiction; maybe Saskatchewan has something sort of similar. We have socio-economic agreements, which clearly are supportive of the residents in the Northwest Territories, to help us retain as many benefits as we can from these sorts of things.

The challenging thing for our government still is around the regulatory thing, and the Premier has been out there working diligently to get the federal government to have discussions with us to turn that over to us. Specifically to the Member's question of how this plan lines up with us, I think that we were a great contributor to this thing. I think, from everything that I am hearing and what you have seen here lately, with the Fraser Institute bumping us from 21st to 10th place, it clearly shows that our officials and staff in our departments are working very hard and that it is paying off for us.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you to the Minister for the reply. PDAC is obviously one of the largest gatherings of mining companies from around the world, and thousands upon thousands of delegates join there every year. That is where industry meets every year. I would like to ask the Minister if he has any insight on what the commentary or what the feedback has been from industry with regard to the federal government's announcement on this plan, and in particular, if he can, what the feedback is from our northern industry partners on this plan.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: We had the Nunavut-NWT Chamber of Mines actually attend PDAC this year. They were there for this announcement, and they were clearly supportive of what is in this documentation. There were a number of resource players from the Northwest Territories at PDAC. I had a number of side conversations with them, and they are quite happy with what is in this document, I think, as a country, as a whole, and how we are going to try to promote this industry and make us a global leader in this area of production in this country, but I think it got overshadowed a bit with our other federal announcement that took place down there.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, that is a good tie-in to my next question, which is: I would like to ask the Minister, then, if we recognize that the new plan is going to identify aspects around environmental responsibility and about Indigenous participation, does the plan identify anything specifically with regard to the infrastructure challenges, the infrastructure gap, that we have in Canada relating to resource development, but in particular in the North? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: I am not so sure that the plan specifically speaks to exactly what our infrastructure deficit is, but those conversations are always at the forefront of all of our conversations, be it with industry players, the government, or other levels of government, be it provincial or territorial.

At the same time, when I was down there, we took the opportunity to meet with some industry players and financiers, again, to explain what is going on in the Northwest Territories and clearly lay out what we are trying to do in the NWT, particularly around infrastructure, be it the Taltson Hydro Expansion Project, the Slave Geological Province, or the Mackenzie Valley Highway. Those are the three big ones. We clearly laid out what we are working on, what participation of federal government has given us support here in the last couple of months to work on a number of these projects, and had some meaningful discussion about how we think that people can participate in these types of projects, be it either Indigenous participation with equity involvement or what P3 type of opportunities there might be to come out of these things, but how we have to work with all people in the Northwest Territories to help move these projects forward and make sure that everyone has a voice at the table. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

QUESTION 646-18(3):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES MANUFACTURING
STRATEGY

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. I would like to ask him when he is planning to table the Manufacturing Strategy. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is something that we have been working on, but to update this House, we have actually shared this with the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment on February 15th for comment. Once it has been looked at by committee and responded to, we will be working on finalizing the strategy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: Could the Minister give us a preview by telling us how that strategy will assist a small-scale manufacturing plant like the one that I discussed in my statement, the fish-tanning plant in Iceland? How will this strategy help that kind of enterprise?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: This strategy has been something that I have been following very closely. As the Member probably knows, I used to be the chair, I guess, of the Manufacturing Strategy. We actually invited the Canadian president of the Manufacturers' Association of Canada to come up and participate with committee and the Members,

and we actually had a couple of the Members of the committee participate. I think the Member from Hay River North was there, and the chair of the Standing Committee on Economic Development was there, as well, to be able to participate in these discussions. We have had a number of actions that are proposed in this draft strategy moving forward. Through discussions with the northern manufacturers to date, these proposed actions have been met with a positive response by the manufacturers, and it should lead to strengthening the strategy.

To your specific question of what would it do for fish tanning, I have had discussions with the Member on that, and it is a very novel concept. It is something that I actually thought was very interesting, and that I didn't even know about, that is taking place in other parts of the globe. That would have to be an initiative that would have to be brought forward by an entrepreneur, and if there is an opportunity for an entrepreneur to have a look at that and make some money on it, I would certainly encourage it. It was something that I was very impressed by.

MS. GREEN: Thanks to the Minister for that answer. I understand that the Manufacturing Strategy isn't to conduct the business, but to assist the businesses that are going into manufacturing or expanding it. It is my understanding from discussion in this House last fall about the Manufacturing Strategy that there would be no money attached to it. Is that still the case?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Currently, there is no new money attached to this strategy.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. It was my understanding from that same discussion that money for enhancing manufacturing would come from the existing SEED fund, and I note that the value of the fund is not budgeted to increase in the next fiscal year. I guess I am wondering how this strategy will be implemented. Mahsi.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: As I have said, we have shared it with committee. The Member has an opportunity to access that, I believe, through committee, to have a look at it. We have worked on this thing closely with northern manufacturers, and the proposed actions that we have in there, as I have said, have a positive response. We will continue to work with the manufacturers' association, committee, and all Members of this House on trying to figure it out; we are already the leader of manufacturers in the three territories, but how do we make it even better? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

QUESTION 647-18(3):
DEVELOPING A KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Earlier today I discussed the presentation made by Hotii ts'eeda for their great discussion paper on the knowledge economy. The Minister of Environment and Natural Resources has the lead for our government on the knowledge economy, and I would like to ask him for an update. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the 2019 draft main estimates, which we are debating in Committee of the Whole, for Industry, Tourism and Investment, they have identified some money for work to begin on April 1, 2019, on a strategy to advance the knowledge economy. My understanding is that a project manager has been hired and work is under way. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks to the Minister for that. I am wondering whether the Minister or his staff have had a chance to review the discussion paper by Hotii ts'eeda on building the knowledge economy and how they intend to respond to it.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We welcome any work towards advancing research priorities of the knowledge economy in the North, including the recognition of social developments and health, the importance of multiple knowledge and informing research in economic diversification. As to the Member's question, I could not tell you off the top of my head if we have had an opportunity to review that. I will find that out, and I will get back to the Members. If there was some work done towards it, and if there was an opportunity that we had to address it and review it, I am not aware of that, but it may have been done, so I will follow up and inform the Members.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks to the Minister for that. To help him with his homework, I am going to table the document a little bit later today. That trusty mandate tracker website shows that the knowledge agenda action plan was supposed to be released in the fourth quarter of 2018. Can the Minister tell us why it has been delayed and when the public can expect to see it, hopefully in draft form?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The work on the knowledge economy continues to progress appropriately. ITI, from my understanding, is working on the background research to support the

development of the draft framework for the advancement of the knowledge economy, and we are hoping to have this work done by the winter of 2019 for review by the next government. That goes towards the Member's question.

It was supposed to be a mandate item in this particular government. However, there is still some work that we need to be doing. As I said in my Minister's statement before, some of the work that we are doing on the on-the-land program is, starting this month, we will be holding some open houses with communities across the territories to get input on the on-the-land unit and some of the initiatives that we are working on. For this particular issue that the Member is raising, my understanding is that we are hoping to have the work done for review by the next government.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I would like to thank the Minister for that. I was hoping that we were going to get to the work on the knowledge economy a lot sooner. It was something that we added to the mandate at mid-term. There may be a chance to talk about this again tomorrow. Again, that trusty mandate tracker shows that there is supposed to be a proposal developed for a northern centre for sustainability and community resilience. Can the Minister provide a status report on the development of this proposal, including how much funding has been secured? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The Departments of ENR and Education, Culture and Employment are preparing to undertake a feasibility study in 2019-2020 for the northern centre of excellence. In light of the recent Aurora College foundational review, it was determined that the scope of the feasibility study would be revised to consider the outcomes of the Aurora research review. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

QUESTION 648-18(3):
ACADEMIC UPGRADING FOR ADULT
LEARNERS

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today I was asking the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment about upgrading, and stuff like that. I need to follow up with a couple more questions for the Minister. We have set up a meeting to go into the communities. Can the Minister make a commitment to be prepared and to have her staff prepared to discuss upgrading and

the challenges they are facing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going into the Nahendeh riding for a constituency tour, as long as the plans all follow through and we can get a double-engine plane. Anyone I hear at those meetings, I am willing to talk to. I am willing to listen to all of the concerns of the people, of whoever I meet with. That has just been my style. However, for me to make any commitments around how we are going to deal with upgrading or the community learning centres at that time would be inappropriate, because that is a process that has to be done within our polytechnic university as we move towards that. Yes, I will hear it, but no, I probably won't commit to anything at that time, unless they are easy commitments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. THOMPSON: I am not asking her for a commitment, but I am asking her to make sure that she has her staff there, the superintendent of schools, ECE, and a couple of other people there, to hear the concerns from people about the upgrading needed. Can she commit to having at least a couple of those people available to be part of the tour?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I can commit to having staff available from Education, Culture and Employment. I will check with the superintendent. I am not sure of his availability, so I can't stand here today and commit to a superintendent when I don't even know if he will be available.

MR. THOMPSON: The Minister talked about distance learning and the program that the department is using, and it is a great program. However, it is very much a peer setting. It is the top level, to get people into college or to university. Can the Minister advise: is the department looking at adding additional courses to the distance learning opportunity?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: When I first took over Education, I was shocked that we didn't even offer the upper-level courses in all of the small communities. I was naive and made an assumption that education was accessible to all. I have since learned that that is not so.

At this point, we are just trying to get the Northern Distance Learning into all of the small communities. With the adding of the four that are coming up now, that will bring it up to 15. Those are for the upper level. Those are the grades that people cannot access right now, currently, in their communities, although we still have issues with other ones. At

this point, until we can get that Northern Distance Learning into every small community to address those top levels, I am not willing to look at it. After that is done, I think it should be something that an MLA should question the Minister on.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Minister for that answer. Unfortunately, I'm asking the questions today, so I am not going to wait until tomorrow or until the future. I am asking about other courses, the expanding of the program right now that exists. Have you looked at that opportunity? Could you make a commitment to get the department to look, at least, that opportunity for expanding it to other courses, just not the peer courses? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Like I said now, with the adding of four new schools this coming year, that's only bringing us up to 15 schools, and then, next year, we'll be bringing it up to another five, so we can actually have 20 schools. I will put the offer out there to the department and ask them to consider it. I will not make it a full-blown research project with a "what we heard" document, an action plan, and a framework because I don't think we're at that stage yet, Mr. Speaker. I think we're still trying to implement the beginning intent of the programs before expanding it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Hay River North.

QUESTION 649-18(3):
HOUSING ISSUES IN HAY RIVER

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have some questions for the Minister of Housing about the Housing Corporation's future plans in Hay River. I'm aware that there's a seniors' planning study that was undertaken, and so, that's probably going to be fed into what becomes a broad plan for the town. Instead of asking about what's the big plan, I'll ask about some specifics. The Hay River high-rise has been an issue for years. It's been ongoing, and I've asked the Ministers questions about this before. There are many units in that building rented out to people on income assistance who are waiting for social housing to become available. If you just look at the news over the past couple of years, there are ongoing issues with the fire marshal, different structural aspects of the building, and there are concerns that this building may be shut down at some point. Every time I bring this up, I get the answer that we're working on it. We have a team that's looking at things. This team has been together for years, now. What is the plan in case the Hay River high-rise has to shut down

and evict all of its residents? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is right. Currently, there are no public housing units in the high-rise. It is on our agenda to take a look at, obviously, if something should happen in terms of if the building should be condemned. We need to have a plan. We are working with the leadership in Hay River to address that. Obviously, under the National Housing Co-Investment Fund that I've made statements in this House about, that provides an opportunity for partners to collaborate and work together to develop possibly a new rental construction.

We do know that that is an issue in Hay River. Like I said, it is on our agenda. The Member did make comments that we do have the seniors' planning study, is another concern that we do have in Hay River, and we are willing to continue work with our stakeholders to see how we can address this. As the Member knows, we have sat down with the new leadership in Hay River to look at how we can move forward in terms of addressing whether it's the market rental units, or even public housing in Hay River. As I've said in this House, our community housing plans are going to help us create priorities, hopefully for all our communities across the Northwest Territories, and we are looking forward to working with the Town of Hay River to address these needs. Thank you.

MR. SIMPSON: I, too, hope for the best, but I think we need to prepare for the worst, and it doesn't sound like there's actually a concrete plan to deal with the possibility of a lot of these people being essentially homeless if the high-rise is forced to shut down.

Another issue is the Riverview Lodge in Hay River. It's a seniors' home. It's about 40 years old, and I've heard rumours that it might be replaced. It might be demolished. I'd like the Minister to speak about what are the plans for the Riverview Lodge in Hay River?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Yes, we are going to be looking at a replacement within the next five years for that building. The Housing Corporation plans to construct the replacement seniors' complex on existing NWT Housing Corporation's own land, avoiding the need to displace the current senior tenants. We do have a plan in place moving forward. I can get more details for the Member, but there is a plan in place. As I mentioned, we're looking at a replacement within the next five years. Obviously, we don't want to displace our seniors. We want to make sure that they are in an existing

infrastructure, and we will keep the Member updated on that plan.

MR. SIMPSON: I appreciate that answer. I'm also asking because the employees of the housing authority need to know what's going on, as well, because they're the ones who really have to work on the front line and answer these questions. The Minister mentioned that the Riverview Lodge will be built on existing housing-owned land in Hay River. There's a lot of land owned by the Housing Corporation in Hay River. There are the 26 lots all clumped together that were formerly known as Disneyland. Can the Minister give us an update on what the plans are for those lots of land in Hay River that the housing authority owns but are not being used?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: The Housing Corporation currently owns six vacant lots in Hay River. Four of these lots comprise, as the Member said, the Disneyland property, which is earmarked for the replacement of the Riverview Lodge. At present, this land is required to support the NWT Housing Corporation's capital planning needs, and we'll continue to focus on that. Should any land or property be identified as surplus at a later date, the property will be disposed of in accordance with the NWT Housing Corporation's disposal policy.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Member for Hay River North.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's very interesting, that they're planning on relocating the Riverview Lodge there. I didn't know that. Every week I look in the Hay River Hub, our newspaper, and I see ads from the Housing Corporation imploring residents to sell them land. You know, if private individuals have land, the Housing Corporation wants to buy it. What is the plan with all of this land the Housing Corporation is trying to buy up? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: In short, we're always looking for land that will support our future capital planning and the projects that we are looking at developing. Obviously, in short, we are just looking for land that we can look at developing. As I said, the community housing plans that we are going to be working on, working with the leadership and stakeholders in the Town of Hay River, will help address the priorities that are needed. Yes, just in short, we're just looking for land that is going to help support our capital plans for the Town of Hay River. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Item 9, written questions. Item 10, returns to written questions. Item 11, replies to Commissioner's opening address. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item

14, tabling of documents. Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission. Tabling of documents.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 367-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
613-18(3): WORKERS' SAFETY AND
COMPENSATION COMMISSION RATE
STRUCTURE

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 613-18(3): Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission Rate Structure." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Minister of Justice.

TABLED DOCUMENT 368-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
590-18(3): POLICING SERVICES IN
TSIIGHEHTCHIC

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table to the following three documents entitled "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 590-18(3): Policing Services in Tsiighehtchic." It's actually one document. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I apologize.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Member for Nahendeh.

TABLED DOCUMENT 369-18(3):
CORRESPONDENCE FROM SHENE
CATHOLIQUE-VALPY DATED JANUARY 23, 2019
REGARDING TRADITIONAL SPELLINGS IN
CHIPEWYAN LANGUAGE

TABLED DOCUMENT 370-18(3):
TRANSACTIONS OF THE CANADIAN INSTITUTE,
VOLUME IV., 1892-93

TABLED DOCUMENT 371-18(3):
THE SOUTH NAHANNI RIVER REGION, N.W.T.
(1820-1972): PATTERNS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC
TRANSITION IN THE CANADIAN NORTH

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do have three documents I'd like to table. The first one is a letter from Ms. Catholique-Valpy in regard to her daughters' names spelled in traditional for identification. The second one is "Transactions of the Canadian Institute, Volume IV, 1892-93" and "The South Nahanni River Region, NWT (1820-1972): Patterns of Socio-Economic Transition in the Canadian North." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Member for Frame Lake.

TABLED DOCUMENT 372-18(3):
DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABLE KNOWLEDGE
ECONOMY IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES:
A HOTII T'SEEDA DISCUSSION PAPER

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I would like to table the following document, "Developing a Sustainable Knowledge Economy in the Northwest Territories: A Hotii t'seeda Discussion Paper." Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

TABLED DOCUMENT 373-18(3):
OFFICE OF THE LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER
FOR THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ANNUAL
REPORT FOR 2017-2018

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Pursuant to Section 23 of the Official Languages Act, I wish to table the Office of the Northwest Territories Official Languages Commissioner Annual Report 2017-2018. Now, I wish to draw your attention to the presence of the Language Commissioner, Ms. Shannon Gullberg, who is with us today in the gallery. Please join me in welcoming Ms. Gullberg to the Assembly this afternoon. Item 15, notices of motion. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 34-18(3):
REFERRAL OF 2018 REVIEW OF MEMBERS'
COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS REPORT TO
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MS. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that, on Thursday, March 7, 2019, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that Tabled Document 237-18(3): 2018 Review of Members' Compensation and Benefits Report, be referred to the Committee of the Whole for consideration. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 42:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE PETROLEUM
PRODUCTS TAX ACT

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that, on Thursday, March 7, 2019, I will move that Bill 42, An Act to Amend the Petroleum Products Tax Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 43:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE INCOME TAX ACT

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that, on Thursday, March 7, 2019, I will move that Bill 43, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters: Bill 31, Northwest Territories 911 Act; Committee Report 12-18(3), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2018 Report of the Auditor General of Canada on Northwest Territories Child and Family Services; Committee Report 13-18(3), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of Bill 31: Northwest Territories 911 Act; Minister's Statement 131-18(3), Sessional Statement 44; Minister's Statement 151-18(3), New Federal Infrastructure Agreement; Minister's Statement 158-18(3), Developments in Early Childhood Programs and Services; and Tabled Document 322-18(3), Main Estimates, 2019-2020 with Member for Hay River North in the chair. By the authority given to me as Speaker by Motion 7-18(3), I hereby authorize that the House will sit beyond the daily hour of adjournment to consider the business before the House.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): I will now call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Committee would like to consider Tabled Document 322-18(3), Main Estimates 2019-2020, with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment as the item under consideration. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you committee. We will consider the document. First, a brief recess.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Welcome back, committee. We have agreed to consider Tabled Document 322-18(3), Main Estimates, 2019-2020, with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, which begins on page 25 of the document. There are five activities, with information items at the back. To begin, we will turn to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment for opening statements. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am pleased to present the 2019-2020 Main Estimates for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Overall, the department's estimates propose an increase of \$9.8 million or three percent over the 2018-2019 Main Estimates.

Improving education outcomes and student success requires ongoing support from early childhood through to post-secondary education and training. Our 2019-2020 Main Estimates reflect this approach.

The 2019-2020 estimates includes funding of \$2.4 million to support initiatives, including the expansion of the Northern Distance Learning program to four additional small communities; the development of the Northern Studies curriculum for grades 11 and 12; and the implementation of a Territorial Support Team to assist students with complex needs. On the social programs side, this funding also includes an increase to rates for disabled and elderly clients on income support.

Another highlight of the proposed estimates is forced growth funding of \$2.8 million, including an increase of \$1.7 million to address increased demand on income security programs. Other forced growth increases will respond to the recommendations associated with a review of the Student Transportation Policy and provide for maintenance and security requirements for the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre.

The estimates also reflect \$4.2 million for other funding adjustments, such as the Canada-NWT Workforce Development Agreement and the GNWT-NWT Teachers' Association collective agreement.

The department continues to work to meet the mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories. I would like to draw attention to some key initiatives for 2019-2020:

- Further implementation of the new junior kindergarten to grade 12 Indigenous Languages and Education Policy and its renewed funding and accountability structure;
- Launch of the second year of a pilot of the new Our Languages curriculum for Indigenous languages;

- Introduction of an Early Learning Framework for Children that reflects the cultures of the NWT, to be used in early childhood programs; and
- Continued work on the government's response to the Aurora College Foundational Review.

These are a few highlights for the 2019-2020 fiscal year. I look forward to working with Members to advance our priorities and the mandate actions related to Education, Culture and Employment. That concludes my opening remarks. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. I understand you have witnesses you wish to bring in the Chamber. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber, and Minister, you may take your seat at the witness table. Minister, please introduce your witnesses for the record.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. On my right is Ms. Sylvia Haener, who is the deputy minister of Education, Culture and Employment. On my left is Laura Gareau. She is the assistant deputy minister for Corporate Services. Their role here today is to help me and make sure I don't get into any hot sauce while I am here.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Good luck with that, Minister. The department totals can be found on page 29, but as usual, we will defer consideration of the totals until we look at each activity. The first activity is corporate management and is found on page 32 and runs to 34. Do we have comments or questions on this activity? Corporate management. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to ask the Minister: is this the correct page or activity on which to ask questions about the new position of associate deputy minister for post-secondary education?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is in this area, the directorate. She can ask questions at this time; it is just not reflected at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like the Minister to remind us how it is possible to hire this ADM with no increase in the budget for compensation and salaries. Well, excuse me, there is a \$3,000 increase in the budget. How is it possible to hire this ADM with only a \$3,000

increase in the compensation and benefits segment of this budget? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The way it is possible to do that is because, when the previous president actually stepped down from the position, we used an acting position from the VP of student services. Of course, then, that position does not get two full salaries, so there were some savings there. As well, we haven't taken any of the funding away for the social work or education programs, so there is extra money in the college at this point. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If the money was taken from other activities to fund the position in this area, why isn't it reflected in the budget? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The position was actually hired after the business plans and these mains were drawn up, so it is a timing issue, but there is money in the current budget to actually allow for that salary to be implemented. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you. I find that answer surprising because the advertising for the position went out in September, and I think the revised version of the mains that we received was in January. I am wondering if the Minister is planning to reveal the true cost of this position and any associated positions, such as an assistant, in the next budget. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If it is all right with committee, we can get that information to you, a breakdown of how that works, and provide it to standing committee ASAP. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you. I appreciate the Minister's commitment to tell us what the total cost is of this ADM position and any related positions, such as an assistant, but my primary request is that the next mains include this position in this activity area so that the cost of administration is contained in one

activity area, rather than being borrowed from other areas. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have asked the department, and yes, the commitment from the department is that it will be included in the next mains. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Nothing further from Ms. Green. Next, Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In regard to the distance learning program, previously the Minister was talking about an expansion there. How much money is it going to cost us to expand to these additional four communities? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Perhaps the Minister could advise whether this would be better dealt with in a different activity. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is actually later, but we can answer it if the Chair is all right with that. The actual amount that is in the budget for the expansion of the Northern Distance Learning Program is \$432,000. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: I apologize. I was looking at it through the evaluation part of it. Is this the area where we talk about the SCIP and the evaluation of that? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Maybe we can clear this up. Would these be better left to early childhood and school services? Is that the correct area, Minister Cochrane?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Chair, that is correct.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Thompson, do you have other questions related to this first activity?

MR. THOMPSON: I'll go on to this one here. In regard to the teaching certificate and learning management, is this the area that we talk about it for this one?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is also in education later on. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Nothing further from Mr. Thompson on this activity. I just request, before Members speak, to make sure that the light indicating that the microphone is working is on. Anything further to corporate management? Seeing none, I will call the activity. Corporate management, operations expenditures summary, total activity, \$9,787,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Please turn to activity 2, culture, heritage and languages. This activity begins on page 35 and continues to page 38. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I see from the business plan that is posted on the Department of Finance website that there are sunsets of two term devolution archivist positions over at the museum, presumably, or the archives. Can someone explain to me what is going on here? Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is actually found on page 36, and it is part of the culture and heritage monies. What happened was the funding for two devolution archivists was sunsetted, and so, after that happened, we actually asked for the money back. They gave us indeterminate funding for that, so it is an in and out. We have it as a debit for that column one and then, actually, a credit at the same time, so it doesn't really show. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Are these positions now going to be permanent at the archives, then? Is that the case? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The understanding is that they will be indeterminate unless we decide to give back control to the federal government. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I am not advocating either of those options. Look, I am one of the few MLAs who has probably ever been over to the archives, and it is a well-used facility. It is a great institution there. They are great people. They know the history of the Northwest Territories, and I am glad to hear that those two positions are going

to be made permanent because we have a wonderful collection. It is well-used by researchers from southern Canada and even some local people once in a while. I don't care where the funding comes from, wherever, but I am very pleased to hear that those two are permanent positions. I thank the Minister for the response. Thank you. That is all I have.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Next, I have Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have just a couple of questions on the language. I know that there is a lot of discussion on languages, and I know that the department is basically working with the land claim organizations to do language programs, but I think that we need to do more. Even though the organizations are doing the best that they can with the funding that they get, it is never enough funding.

I think we have a good opportunity here. In the last Assembly, I had the opportunity to travel with the Minister to Alaska. There is a great program that they have there with the Gwich'in language, and it is a shame that we don't send people there to take that course and get their certificate in the Gwich'in language or another language. Inupiat is the same thing, just a different dialect, but that is what I would like to see in the future. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, there are never enough languages. It is a concern right across Canada, and it should be a concern for all of us MLAs. We do give language monies out. We have regional language coordinators in every region. We give money to the Aboriginal governments. We give money to the education system to Indigenize our grade schools. I am also very hopeful, Mr. Chair, because we have begun the visioning exercise. I am hoping that people throughout the Northwest Territories, including the MLAs here, will identify, hopefully, that Indigenous languages are something that we need to look at in our post-secondary, as well. Although, like I say, that is my wish. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Anything further, Mr. Blake?

MR. BLAKE: Yes, thank you. Any time our students want to travel out for school, it is always a challenge with SFA. I think that we should have a separate pot of funding for students who are taking Indigenous languages. That would be a real benefit to them, to take those courses, especially if you have to go to Alaska, for example, because that is one of the best programs out there. That should be

available to people who want to take that opportunity. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do agree that we need to support anyone who actually looks at taking courses in Indigenous languages. Thanks to the federal funding, we have changed our courses that are available right now at Aurora College. It used to be a certificate program in language revitalization, and now we have bumped it up to actually being a degree program. Oh, it's still a certificate.

The other thing that we have is we have expanded our scholarships to provide for students [microphone turned off]...program. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. I will remind everyone that, if the light is on, your sidebar conversations can likely be heard, just so people know. Nothing further from Mr. Blake. Next, we have Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My question for the Minister relates to page 37. I am wondering if she could tell us the last year in which arts organization operating funding was increased. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We will have to get back to the committee on when the last increase to the arts organization operating funding was. You will see in the mains that there is \$200,000 provided to the NWT Arts Council. It was a supplemental last year, in this mains. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The page that I have has \$460,000 for the next fiscal year, this fiscal year, and the fiscal year prior to that. My question really is, given the importance of festivals and cultural events to tourism and the growth in tourism, whether the Minister has considered increasing this line item to drive that segment of our economy. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I think that we do need to look at our arts community. It is another diversification of the economy. It is something that I think we need to

support. We are just finalizing the Arts Strategy, which will be provided. It is just going through Cabinet and will be going to standing committee. Then, after that, we are developing an action plan. Within that action plan, we will identify increases as needed. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: That is good news. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to be clear that I am talking about arts organization operating funding, not NWT Arts Council funding. Are we talking about the same thing? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Absolutely. The strategy goes across all sectors. It does not just look at the arts council; it looks at the arts community. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Could the Minister just confirm that the work, including the action plan, will be done during the remainder of this Assembly? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We are working very closely with the NWT Arts Council. We are just finishing up the Arts Strategy, the draft, which will have to go to standing committee. As soon as that is approved by standing committee and here, then we will be actually working on the action plan. I will try to get that done in this Assembly, but I can't commit that it will, because it is important that we get this right. Like I said, the strategy came across my desk, and I flipped it right back and said, "Let the Arts Council." I have committed to actually working very closely with the arts council on this, and I want to honour my commitment to the Arts Council. We will try our best, but we can't commit that it will be completed. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you for that response. Nothing further.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Next, Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the previous speaker and the Minister with regard to starting to talk a little bit about the

NWT Arts Strategy, because that is what I would like to touch on maybe a little bit more.

To what extent you can, can you share with us a little bit about what the Arts Strategy will undertake? What I mean is that I am not just interested in doing some of the good things that we have done in terms of assigning resources and particular finances to a number of the arts festivals and artists themselves, et cetera, but whether we are looking at opportunities to use resources to diversify arts, how we will tag arts into tourism, how we will promote and exploit Indigenous culture in terms of the arts? I would like you, if you can, to maybe explain a little more to us exactly what the strategy will be undertaking. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Haener.

MS. HAENER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The strategy provides a recognition of the link between the arts and tourism and what that brings to the economy of the NWT. The strategy also speaks to a more modern view of the arts and a reflection of the fact that, in today's digital age, arts and artists' pursuits look different than they have in the past, so the strategy is really trying to update our perspective on the arts, as well.

Really, a very strong link to the economy and to tourism is presented in the strategy, as well as a recognition of traditional pursuits and how those are reflected and their vitality within the arts generally. That kind of gives you a general sense of what is contained in the strategy. As the Minister indicated, we do have a draft very close to being ready to share with standing committee for their input, as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Okay. That is great, Mr. Chair. Thank you, and I appreciate the additional insight. Just one last quick question, then. Clearly, we are doing a lot of interdepartmental work on making sure that the appropriate departments are contributing to the strategy. Just to confirm that? Then, secondly, maybe a little bit, if you can, about what we are expecting to see in an action plan would be nice to hear, as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we worked interdepartmentally, especially with ITI. We have shared the document in draft with the deputy minister. We are waiting to bring it to Cabinet and then to standing committee. The action plan actually moves forward. I think

there are five areas in the strategic plan. The strategic plan is more of an overarching document, and then the action plan really is very concrete: how are we going to achieve these goals that we have set forth? The strategic plan is the overarching goals; the action plan is where the work is going to be done. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Nothing further from Mr. Vanthuyne. Seeing nothing further from committee, I will call this activity. Education, Culture and Employment, culture, heritage, and languages, operations expenditure summary, activity total, \$17,883,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBER: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Please turn to the third activity, early childhood and school services. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My questions relate to page 41, starting with early childhood development and learning. I notice that there is an \$800,000 decrease from the revised estimates for the current fiscal year compared to the next fiscal year. I am wondering if the Minister can tell us why funding in this area has gone down. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Gareau.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As the Members may be aware, we received funding from Canada for the Early Learning and Child Care Agreement. It is a multi-year funding agreement from the Government of Canada. The year-over-year difference, the \$80,000 decrease is just really reflective of the action plan we have developed with Canada, the activities we want to fund, and what year those activities will be undertaken. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you to Ms. Gareau for that response, and also for catching the extra number there. Could she please provide more detail about the difference between the projects in the two years? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Directing this to Ms. Haener, I take it. Ms. Haener.

MS. HAENER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The funding flow is also reflective of the fact that we signed the agreement very late in its first year. Because of that, we were able to shift some resources from that first year to the second year, because of how late we signed. What the spread of the dollars is also reflective of is the recognition that some of the

funding is being used to support things like increased inspections. There are resources associated with that where we would have to spool up at the start with human resources for that kind of thing.

I am just looking at the briefing notes here to provide a bit more information. There is also a reflection of junior kindergarten that is also captured within this funding area. The expenditures there would differ from year to year, as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. What is the impact on children themselves of this change in funding? It sounds like it is primarily administrative. Is that correct?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The impact on children actually should be better services with the implementation of junior kindergarten, which made accessible early childhood development programming to all communities in the Northwest Territories, where that wasn't an option before. The licenced childcare centres actually got increases last year to provide extra money for infants and children who were needing support. Ideally, the impact for children should be better services. That, of course, will take an evaluation period. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thought this was the federal money. I didn't realize it was the JK money. I appreciate the Minister clarifying that this is, in fact, the pot of money for junior kindergarten. From which level of government does it come? I thought it came from the territorial government. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The funding that comes for junior kindergarten is from both the GNWT and the federal government agreements. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am now going to move down the list to inclusive schooling. I see an \$800,000 decrease in the amount of money

allocated to inclusive schooling. Can the Minister please explain that change? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The \$916,000 decrease for inclusive schooling was a transfer. We transferred \$639,000 to the mental health resources to Health and Social Services to fund the Beaufort-Delta and the Sahtu for their mental health counsellors, which again fall within inclusive schooling. Then we did a transfer of \$279,000 to the mental health resources to fund the Deh Cho and the Tlicho Governments, as well. It is just transferring the money so that we can provide the mental health services support that is going out to all schools. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you. We will see further increases in this area as the rest of the mental health support worker program in the schools rolls out. Is that correct? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is correct. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Nothing further.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thanks. Next, I have Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In regard to these new child and youth care counsellor positions, have you got any feedback to see if it is working in the communities that presently have started this new initiative? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Haener.

MS. HAENER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We are currently working with the Sahtu and the Beaufort-Delta to get ready for implementation there. The implementation so far has seen a rollout in the Tlicho and the Deh Cho with the combined, on-the-ground youth counsellors in schools as well as the travelling team that was providing services to smaller schools. From what we understand, things are working reasonably well. The positions have been staffed where there were vacancies. I think there may have been some turnover already, we understand, in at least one community.

The counsellors are there. They are on the ground. They are being welcomed into the school environments and oriented to be fully part of the school team. Things seem to be going well. I don't have specifics in terms of numbers of counselling sessions held in that level of detail with me; I just have a fairly high level of information around success to date. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess my concern is: has the department been coming back or evaluating this? Right now, my challenge is I am hearing different things. I know two positions aren't filled. Then there is a demand on the staff. Will you be looking at making sure this is the proper process? Because, again, we have come out with this great idea, but if it is not working, what are the mechanisms in place that you can guarantee that this stuff is working? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Absolutely, it is important that we do evaluations of any new program that we are rolling out, so we commit to doing that. I do want to just say a little bit that change is something that is never usually accepted very easily. I am sure that when we rolled out the Northern Distance Learning, there were comments or complaints, as well, and yet it is proven to be very successful, so initial comments on change should not be something that we evaluate it on. It should be a formal evaluation process that is carried out at the end of each school year to see if they are working, and we will commit to doing those evaluations. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I agree, people complain about change. It is not what we are looking for, but I am talking about the impact on our students. That there is my biggest concern when, you know, right now I know, in the riding I represent, we are two positions short, so that is putting a demand on the other two who are doing the job, and the travelling team. So, again, are we providing the best service? That there is my concern, that, if we are not providing the service, we are not doing the job for the youth. If we are talking the end of the year, when will we see the reports on the success or the challenges that we face with this new implementation? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. According to our records right now, in Fort Simpson we have one child and youth counsellor that is filled. In Fort Simpson, we have a clinical supervisor, which is critical. That is filled as of January 2019. Kakisa, I will just go on, has one position filled, a child a youth counsellor. Fort Liard has a vacant one, and that is the one we are talking about and it has been reposted. All of the other ones are contracted services for Jean Marie River, Nahanni Butte, Wrigley, and Samba K'e. The only one that we have vacant, according to our schedule there is only one, and it has been reposted. The reality is we would like to be able to have indeterminate employees all the time; that is not reality in life. Positions do come and go. People come and go. Positions are there, but people come and go, so we are trying to hire as soon as possible. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I agree that people come and go, but Fort Liard hasn't had that position filled for a long time, so that is a concern for me, and especially the community. I would just like to go on to the SCIP. We are on to our third year, so what have we learned for the last two years? Are we waiting until the very end for a three-year pilot project and then we will move forward to do an evaluation? Have we done an evaluation on the last two years? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. An evaluation is being done based on years one and two of the implementation, and it is going to be released early in 2019-2020, so we are in the process of doing that. Or sorry, 2019-2020. The one thing I do need to say, though, is that I have met with the education leaders, the board chairs, the board authorities, or education bodies, and their superintendent, and I have also met with the NWT Association of Teachers, and both bodies have said this is a great program and we need to continue it. So it is an informal evaluation, but it is word-of-mouth by organizations that represent, and they are saying they appreciate it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am not arguing it is a great program, but if all you are going to see is the teachers and the union and the boards, what about the parents? Have you guys reached out to the parents and asked them how? Because I have heard a number of parents who

don't like the SCIP process and that, so again, you know, I understand the teachers and the union and the leaders like that, but what about the parents, and how does their feedback fit into this evaluation process? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As part of the evaluation that we are doing right now, we have submitted a survey to parents asking about the SCIP program and their feedback on it, as well. They will be part of the evaluation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is great to hear, and I am hoping we will get feedback from the parents and that as we move forward. Coming back to distance learning, on the floor here I talked about, you know, it is very much about the peer courses and that, and then we are talking about getting it out there to the schools there, but what about the schools, i.e., in the smaller communities that only go up to grade nine? Right now, that is all they offer and after that, grade 10, 11, and 12, they either have to go to Fort Providence or Fort Simpson to go to school. How are you trying to work with these smaller communities to expand this program in there? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. One thing that is important to state is that the education system is decentralized amongst 10 education bodies that are responsible are implementing, so we have to work really closely with them. It is not appropriate to impose things on it, so there is funding though. I hope Members know that there is funding. If schools in communities are only offering up to grade nine and they want to extend to 10, 11, and 12, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment does have funding to accommodate that. Like I say, right now, our priority is rolling out the 20 communities that we have on target and, once that is done, then I think it is a fair question to ask if we can expand that, too. Video conferencing is the way of the future, and I think it would be naive to say that we are not going to consider that in all of our education in the future coming. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you. I will be real quick with the question. Previously, I have had a

community approach a smaller community asking to get it, you know, to expand there, but what I am understanding is now we have to wait until we get these other 20 before we move ahead? Is this my understanding? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Right now, we have 11. With the rollout of these extra four. That will bring us to 15, and then next year, we are looking at bringing it up another five, so that will bring us to 20 small schools, including the riding of Nahendeh.

I would love to be able to just say, like, "Yes, we are going to go live, and you know, it will be accessible to everyone," but it is very expensive programming and it takes a lot of work to actually do things like curriculum development. It is huge. Getting the teachers trained and providing that is huge. Also what I thought it would be a small thing, but it became a huge deal, is getting school calendars all on par is a huge obstacle in this, so it is not as easy as just saying, "Make it happen." It takes a lot of background work to actually make it happen. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Next, we have Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I see that the NWTTA professional improvement, that line item is allocated \$2 million. Could the Minister please explain how that money is used? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Ms. Haener.

MS. HAENER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The funds reflected in the main estimates are provided to the Teachers' Association in accordance with the collective agreement negotiated with them. There is an amount set out there that we actually provide to the Teachers' Association to administer for professional development for teachers. The Teachers' Association itself accounts for those funds, but they provide supports to teachers to advance their individual educational goals, so teachers actually apply to the Teachers' Association for those monies. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Haener. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you. Is any of this used by the Teachers' Association for the administration, or does the \$2 million all go directly to the teachers for their educational advancement? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There is a small amount that is used for administration. It's actually to provide a position for someone to do the coordinating and organize everything. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you. As the employer, why isn't ECE providing this service? Why is it contracting it out? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Ms. Haener.

MS. HAENER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This isn't actually a contract arrangement. This is a right negotiated by the Teachers' Association on behalf of its members. Teachers' associations across the country take great pride in negotiating provisions like this, where they have control, more direct control, over supporting their members to advance their education. The pay grids for teachers are linked very closely to educational attainment. The higher education a teacher has, the higher pay they receive, so these things are kind of connected. The Teachers' Association manages these funds on their own, and are provided them as per the collective agreement. We don't contract with them for this. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Haener. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you. If this wasn't provided for in the collective agreement, ECE would not offer any sort of educational opportunities for teachers? Is that what I'm hearing? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you. No, that isn't correct. This money is negotiated in the agreement, the collective agreement, but we also provide additional training. We provide training on self-regulation. We provide training on the Indigenizing education. We provide training wherever possible. Training is critical, and it's something that Education takes seriously. It's not something that we just dump on the Association of Teachers and not provide anymore. This is in their collective agreement, and then we provide training as appropriate to the needs of initiatives that we're bringing forward. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you. No, I appreciate that. It seems a little strange to me that, in addition to bargaining on behalf of the teachers, the Teachers' Association bargains on behalf of itself, and got a position out of it, and the fact that pay is linked to educational attainment has nothing to do with the fact that this is the union. It should be the employer who provides that. It's a little strange for me that there's this control by the union of this administrative function that really should be within government, it seems to me. The UNW isn't doing this kind of stuff, to my knowledge, so it's a little strange. I'll move onto something else because I don't have much time here, so I don't want to spend forever on this.

Under education, operations and development, I see here that the South Slave -- well, I guess it just says South Slave here. It shows that there is no net loss of positions in the South Slave. In the business plans, I was told there is no net loss of positions, and in the main estimates, there is no net loss of positions yet. I'm well aware that, in Hay River, there's a position that is being moved to Yellowknife. It doesn't show up in the business plans. It doesn't show up in the main estimates. The department never came out and told me this. I know this because Hay River is a small town. Can I get some explanation on why this information is hidden? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Ms. Haener.

MS. HAENER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There was a restatement of positions that was done, and so yes, it's not as transparent as it otherwise would be within the main estimates. There is one position, the registrar position, that is moving from Hay River to Yellowknife. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Haener. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you. Yes, and I've been in contact with the Minister about this because I can't for the life of me figure out why. I've been told that it's because of a capacity issue, so they're going to move the position from Hay River to Yellowknife, and that's going to increase capacity. It's still one person in that one position. There are no additional positions being added. There are no job descriptions being rewritten in Yellowknife to include duties that would assist that person. It just seems to be the typical response to a problem: well, let's put it in Yellowknife. I mean, I think there were resources in Hay River that could have been utilized. Maybe the Minister could let everyone know why this position is being moved to Yellowknife? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There were a couple of reasons. First of all, some job descriptions were rewritten in Yellowknife to actually accommodate the support for this. They were more in line with the position. The position in Hay River did not align properly with this position. There were different categories. The other thing, one of the biggest reasons for moving it to Yellowknife was on, I believe, three recommendations or three requests from the NWT Association of Teachers who, as Ms. Haener had pointed out earlier, when people get higher education or training and things, their length of terms, their salaries increase. Timeliness was a huge issue with only having the one position. The Association of Teachers has asked us numerous times to actually be located where they are located so that they can actually have more timely responses and access to that position. It's critical for their work to support their teachers, and it was critical to have the appropriate support for that individual. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I've received phone calls from people at the NWTTA, so I know they have access to phones. I don't know how much more timely it can be than picking up a phone and calling somebody and talking to them. I'm confused about that. It sounds again like the union is doing administrative work that the ECE should be doing. Why is the union getting involved with teacher qualifications? They're the union. They're there to protect employees, and this position is about teachers' qualifications. That's an employer responsibility. These are very thin excuses, Mr. Chair, and I'm not buying it. I think that the department really needs to take a close look at what they're doing. Instead of rewriting positions in Yellowknife, rewrite a position in Hay River. I mean it's not complicated. Put an extra phone line in the NWTTA's office, if that's what is needed. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Ms. Haener.

MS. HAENER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This position, the registrar's position, has been operating on its own in Hay River for a number of years. It's actually supervised from Yellowknife, and supervising from a distance can work. Technology does support that, but there are also positions within Yellowknife that help to support the registration function, and connecting those supports to that position on a daily basis, given that all the files were in Hay River, was becoming more challenging, especially

within an environment where we are seeing an increasingly higher number of teacher registration requirements.

Unfortunately, the challenges we have filling positions and with teacher turnover, the demands on this position have increased considerably. We are needing to use those additional supports which are within other positions here in Yellowknife.

As well, there is an increasing need to focus at a higher level on the teacher registration function. As people would be aware, this is a function that is fairly critical in terms of ensuring that individuals have the right qualifications and the right certifications and can pass criminal records checks. Doing the registration certification process in a timely way is critical to ensuring that we have qualified and effective teachers in classrooms, and that things aren't held up due to a high workload that can't be shared out effectively amongst other individuals. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Haener. Next, we have Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A couple of things. One is, I would like to just touch on quickly, as my previous colleague from Yellowknife Centre touched on, with regard to funding that is being reduced from inclusive schooling and is moving over to the Department of Health for youth mental health. Can the department maybe explain a little bit how the determination was made for what amount would be switched over? The reason why I ask is because I am a strong proponent of inclusive schooling, and I see, though, a clear delineation between kids who are identified as having mental health issues versus those who are having cognitive learning disabilities that inclusive schooling is really supposed to pay a lot of attention to, and so I am concerned that we are reducing this particular pot. While I appreciate the other pot being increased, because I see that as a much-needed investment, I am concerned that the specific programming around inclusive schooling has lost some funding. Can the department maybe speak a little bit as to what impacts this might have on the actual inclusive schooling programming? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Ms. Haener.

MS. HAENER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This amount, the reduction of the funds that are moving to Health and Social Services, are reflected in that inclusive schooling line. The funds were attached to positions that each education authority had for counsellors, and they were not fully trained counsellors, necessarily. For example, in the Tlicho, the Tlicho chose to hire art therapists rather than fully trained

mental health counsellors. When we were originally planning, with Health and Social Services, a partnership to try to change the situation in terms of counselling available to youth, it was agreed and determined that it would be much more effective having fully trained counsellors in schools, under full clinical supervision of individuals who were trained counsellors, as well. That is the model that we have gone to here. In order to make that a more viable and more cost-effective endeavour, the funds that were allocated and provided to education authorities for counsellors are being shifted over to Health and Social Services to partly offset the implementation of the whole suite of counselling services that will be available to youth in schools and communities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Haener. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the detailed response. I want to move into early childhood for a moment. I think the Minister is well aware that I have often said that investment in early childhood, and I am talking about ages zero to five, is ultimately where we are going to start to overcome many of the health and well-being issues that we suffer in the territory and improve many of the social outcomes that we currently struggle with, and that this early childhood investment ultimately creates a more productive society and ultimately a better economy. I would just like to start by asking: the early childhood program grants have \$98,000 identified. That has been around, it seems like, for a couple of years. Is that just a one-off that goes to one particular organization? Can we get a little bit of information on who is accessing that \$90,000? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The early childhood staff grant is actually provided to staff who work at licensed childcare centres. It is provided to supplement their wages. It is provided to them directly, and I believe it's on a quarterly basis that they apply and are fund for that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If we move to the next line, we see the early childhood program operator subsidy. We know that this has been long-standing, and this is good. This is a grant to support licensed daycare and day-home operators. I would just like to get a little clarification on this, however. Is this where we have an identified list of operators throughout the entire territory and each one of them gets a particular

amount, or is this on a case-by-case application basis? How do we dispense these funds in this line item? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The early childhood program operator subsidy is actually for daycares and family day homes, licensed; licensed daycare centres and licensed family homes. They are application-based for that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is a fairly significant amount of funds, \$4.2 million. Are we seeing a fairly good distribution of these funds throughout the territory? Who is applying? Have we got a little coverage going into small communities, the regional centres as well as Yellowknife? Has this got a good group that is applying to it? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would love to be able to say that this is actually spread out amongst the 33 communities. The reality is that we have 11 small communities that have no licensed daycare at all, so it's not spread out. Any licensed daycare centre or provider knows of this money and should be accessing this money. I don't know why they would not be. It is not available in all of the communities until we can get those 11 communities covered with licensed childcare facilities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Okay. Thank you, and thank you to the Minister for the reply. I appreciate that there are some communities without licensed daycares or day homes at all, and so I appreciate that there would be no applications coming from there, but I am going to assume from your answer that this funding gets distributed to those communities that do. Quickly, just a comment first. Healthy Food for Learning has been pretty stagnant. While it's a significant fund, it has been staying steady at \$650,000 for the last number of years, so I am going to recommend that, going forward, you should take a look at increasing that. The cost of food goes up continually. The cost of transporting it goes up continually. Eventually, the program, the actual food, getting access, is chipping away if we are not keeping up with the cost of inflation.

Lastly, because I only have under a couple of minutes here, supporting child inclusion and participation is \$1.7 million, and this contributes to target the needs of children who are vulnerable, at risk, or who have specific needs. I would like to know: how is this program going? What is involved in this program, and what kind of, for lack of a better word, uptake, I suppose, is there with regard to us utilizing this program? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Ms. Haener.

MS. HAENER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. When the rates for licensed childcare programs were changed a little over a year ago, there were some efforts put into examining the effectiveness of the different types of funding. There was a category of funding called "the healthy children's initiative." It was changed to the "supporting child inclusion and participation" funding category in an effort to ensure that the funding was being used for the right purpose. There were some daycare providers who were not viewing the funding as supporting children who needed additional supports and assistance, and so the change in name and the change in structuring was an effort to put a greater focus on it and to ensure that the funds were being used for the purpose for which they were intended. Almost all of the licensed childcare facilities have an interest in this, and we have been working closely with them to make sure that they understand the process to access this funding for children who need it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Haener. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: I had one more. Thank you, Mr. Chair, for your indulgence. Okay, I appreciate that, and I am happy to hear that that is going to licensed daycare and day homes. That is where I would rather see it.

Are we doing any long-term observation and monitoring of kids over their lifetimes, or at least into early adulthood? Is there a program of that nature so that we can learn what impacts our investment is having on the benefit, not only for the benefit of the kids themselves, who are receiving the program, but also, hopefully, on the long-term reduction of the public funds? Of all of our early childhood and other programs, are there any programs where we are actually monitoring kids from youth or from infants all the way through to adulthood? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, I would like to say that we monitor

people right through adulthood, but I am not sure how we would do that. I am open to sitting down and talking about that, though. Currently, what we do now, though, is before children enter school, usually age five, we do the early development instrument, which tests their vulnerabilities in five areas, and then Alberta achievement tests are done annually in grade six and grade nine. We also do a middle years development instrument, and that is done annually in grade four and grade seven, and then, finally, we have a health behaviours in school-aged children, which is done every four years in grade six and grade 10. I do say that after grade 10, though, we don't have any tests at this time that are assessing developmental assets in people. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Next on the list, we have Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In my last line of questioning, I was talking a lot about the registrar position as being moved to Yellowknife from Hay River, and much of the time was spent by the witnesses talking about how important the position is, and I agree, it is a very important position. I don't agree with the notion that anything that Hay River can do, Yellowknife can do better. I don't think that that is a solution, Mr. Chair, and I will leave it at that for now.

I have questions about the education authority contributions. Later on in the document here, there is some detail. It discusses how many positions are being allocated to each authority, and it discusses how much of that \$156 million is going to each authority. The South Slave is going to see an increase of \$200,000 in money allocated to it, yet it is going to see a decrease of 10 positions. Can the Minister please explain why the funding is going up, but then the number of positions is going down? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you Mr. Simpson. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Most of the funding allocations are done by enrolment. When enrolments decrease, then funding decreases. However, in that funding that you see is also monies for things like the Indigenizing education. Indigenized education is the biggest one within that.

The allocations for the teaching positions are based on the enrolment, so that is why you see a difference. I do want to stress, though, that the individual education bodies do have the authority. This is what we fund them for. They can actually use their funding or surplus. The majority of them have huge surpluses that they can use at their will,

as long as they have a plan for it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you. What percentage of a surplus are the authorities allowed to hold on to from year to year? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Currently, they are allowed to hold on to 7 percent, and as of 2017, the surplus throughout the 10 education bodies was \$13 million. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. A whopping \$1.3 million each. That's amazing. Has the 7 percent amount changed over the years, or has it always been a 7 percent surplus that they can hold on to? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, it is only a new policy in 2018-2019, and it was because there were concerns. I mean, there are concerns when children are not developmentally ready, when they are not meeting the standards, when they are not showing in the middle years developmental index. There are concerns of children dropping out. There are concerns of children not doing well in school. I have concerns when we are not reaching the needs of children, and yet, we have \$13 million in surplus. I think it was about time that we actually looked at saying, "Give us plans for your surpluses," and so I don't think that that is an unfair recommendation. In fact, I support it. I think that we should have plans for surpluses when children are at risk. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you. Each year the schools have their budgets approved, based on estimates of how many students they will get, or based on, I guess, previous years, and at that time, the surplus is also approved. It is my understanding that, after that approval happens, the department came back and then reduced the allotted surplus. Is that the way that things worked out? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is incorrect. We just told them that this is the policy going forward, and then they had to provide surplus plans for that. The schools are funded by enrolment on the previous year. However, there are exceptional cases. If you had 20 kids in your school last year, we fund you on 20 kids for the coming year, because we can't tell. At the end of September, though, there is a tally done, and then, if there are additional students, substantially additional, then we actually provide additional funding to accommodate that need.

It can work to the benefit of schools if their numbers are lower in the current year, and then, if their numbers are higher, we have additional funding that they can access. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you. I talked about this earlier this sitting in a Member's statement, about how this funding formula might not work so well anymore for places like Hay River, and the Minister said she would look into this. I am wondering: are there plans to look at improving the funding formula so that it works for all jurisdictions? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am very cautious of what I am taking on. Recognizing that we have six months left, this is one that is a priority for me, so yes. I have already asked the department to go cross-jurisdictional and look at how their funding formulas are done.

I do have to give credit to the MLA for Nahendeh, who first brought that to my attention, and it was a concern for me as well. I am looking across jurisdictions to see if there is a better way to fund. We are looking at lower enrolments in the Northwest Territories, so we can't keep basing it on enrolments if our numbers are going down. There will come a time when schools don't have the correct funding to be able to provide core services.

We are looking at doing a cross-jurisdictional review, and then, once that is done, there may possibly be a new funding formula. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you. It is good to hear that there is something happening, but just because something is happening in a different jurisdiction doesn't mean it is the right thing. The right thing is what is going to give kids the best education, so that is what we should focus on, not what PEI is

doing, not what the Yukon is doing. Let's develop something based on what is going to give kids the best education.

Finally, I have questions about the Early Childhood Program contributions. As I understand it, the program has been undergoing some changes, particularly the HCI; the ECIP, Early Childhood Intervention Program, I believe. This has been in the news. There is an association in Hay River called Growing Together. It has been around for over two decades, and it has provided great services, similar to the services that the Minister provided in her previous position before getting into government, and unfortunately, the revamping of these programs has seen funding to very useful, very successful programs like Growing Together being cut. I have brought this up with the Minister, and I was hoping that there would be some sort of change to save these programs. You shouldn't be trying to fix one problem and creating another problem. What is being done to rectify this situation? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The comment that was made that there is no sense in looking at other jurisdictions, and we need to do what is best for us, is absolutely right. However, there is no sense reinventing the wheel. It makes sense. Best practices would say to look at all of the different funding models that are out there and then decide which one works best for the territories, even if we have to adjust it from there, instead of just trying to pick something out of the air and saying how that will work. So I beg to differ; I think that it is important to do research before we make actions.

On the HPI funding, moving into supporting child inclusion and participation, as the Member pointed out, I actually ran a program that actually got this funding. I think that the more that we can do to support parents in learning parenting skills, the better. I think that there is a huge gap in that. It was looking at changing and looking at specializing only in looking at marginalized students or youth, children who are at risk. However, I have asked the department to do a review of that again to make sure, instead of throwing out the baby with the bath. Our goal is to make sure that we are reaching vulnerable youth and that we provide parenting support and cooking support or whatever the support that we think is needed, that can be done within what we have currently. That is one pot of funding that I am actually asking them to reconsider and to just change the terms. I am okay with changing the name. I am not attached to a name, but I am attached to losing great programs that we have currently offered. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you. We will end on a positive note. Nothing further. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you to the Minister.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Next, we have Mr. Nakimayak.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. A lot of my colleagues have asked a lot of questions that I have been thinking about, but I am looking at this page, and I am looking at the third line down, NWTTA professional improvement. Does that include improvement for staff and teachers who come into the territory? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Ms. Haener.

MS. HAENER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The NWTTA professional improvement item is a fund where we provide the money to the Teachers' Association to administer for their members and the educational efforts of their members. It is administered by the Teachers' Association under the collective agreement that we have with them. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Nakimayak.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. I am looking at the health, wellness and student support. I am just wondering: I know that a lot of schools, especially in my region, have applied for funds through Jordan's Principle. I am just wondering if this is the right section to talk about it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is not in the mains, because it is in the individual education bodies' budgets. It is usually external funding. A lot of the schools actually get external funding, such as Jordan's Principle. However, within this area, we do provide support to them in things such as filling out the applications and reviewing the applications. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Nakimayak.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would just like to express some, I wouldn't say concern, but some of the issues that we have been facing in the remote communities where funding like this could help a lot of students. Maybe 20 or 30 years ago, it would have been great, but now it is good that the federal government is recognizing it. It is

administered through the schools. I would recommend that the schools across the territory maybe take a stronger role in this. Once the support is done and the teachers are home for the summer, I am just wondering: what is next for students? What is coming from the education boards and the teachers once school is out, basically, in the summer and these students have some time on their own? I am wondering what the next steps are for that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is a three-year program, I believe. I am not sure what will happen with the new election that comes up. I agree that it is important programming. I think that we need to try to lobby to make sure that it goes further. I also think that we need to work better towards this.

I have heard comments that some schools are taking it and some aren't, and I think it is something that we should bring to the education leaders' table. I think we would be a lot better off if we coordinated within the regions and actually did it through councils and then assimilated to the schools versus the individual schools applying on their own. One school may apply for \$500,000, and the next school may apply for \$10,000, and you are only getting approved for what you ask for. We need to be more coordinated in this funding, and we also need to lobby for any funding that we can get to address the healing that is necessary for Indigenous people. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Nakimayak.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that response. I was kind of going in that direction. When we recruit teachers for remote communities in the territories, sometimes you don't see what you get until they walk off the plane, basically. Sometimes it is amazing. There are some schools that have amazing strengths in writing proposals and some that really don't.

As we move toward the fall and the new school year, seeing that there are two years left of this program, I think that we need to really utilize the strengths that we have in some of those educators early. That might mean adding more money to the professional improvement of the system so that we can actually start prepared rather than react as the school year progresses and have it defined and running well by the end of the school year. I think we need to look ahead and plan so that we can hit those milestones as we move ahead on track, and we will hit the ground running. Just more of a

comment on that, Mr. Chair. I don't know if the Minister wants to comment on it.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I agree. My commitment is that I will put it on the agenda for the education leaders' table, which has all of the education bodies' chairpeople and their superintendents. I think that we need to be more strategic in this. That is our biggest problem. Leaving it to individual schools is not the best way to deal with this funding. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Next, I have Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. On page 44, I see that there is only a part-time position for early childhood and school services. Can the Minister explain why it is only a part-time position for eight communities? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This position is part-time, but we do have the regional early childhood development coordinators who actually provide the support necessary to the region, as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. What is the difference between the Sahtu and the Beaufort-Delta? They all have a full-time position, and I am assuming that they get the support from their staff, as well. Why is it a difference of only a half-time position for the Deh Cho? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The difference would be the number of licensed childcare providers and the demand for the services. Like I said, we do have 11 communities. Once those 11 communities, if we can get to a point where they have licensed childcare centres, then we would need to review it to make sure that our staffing is equitable. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you to the Minister for coming into that world because that is where I was coming. I know those four communities. You need actual support to get these. Four of my communities that I represent don't have licensed daycares. With a half-time position, how can that

individual support the ones that actually have daycares and the ones that are trying to get them in there? It is kind of: well, we want to get 11 more licensed daycares going, but we are not going to give you the supports to it. How can we actually achieve that if we only get a half-time position? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The part-time position would be mostly providing support to the licensed daycare centres and family homes currently in place. The regional coordinator's job, and that has been my direction, is the job to get into the communities that aren't there and to try to do education, public forums, to talk about the services that we have. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you. So not only are we asking them to go out there and promote the daycares, but you are supposed to help this part-time position, so we are just loading up on this individual here, to do more work. Can the Minister explain that rationale? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am trying to remember back to the days when I actually ran a daycare, which wasn't too long ago, actually. You have to remember that these positions are not in the daycare every single day. In fact, when I was running the daycare in Yellowknife here, that position came by twice a year, if I was lucky, usually for the inspection and then just prior to the inspection, a couple of months before, to actually do a mock inspection, to talk about things we were doing. So it is not a full-time position, that they need to be in the licensed daycare centres 24/7. It is more of an inspection role. It is a support role to talk to them about if they are having trouble with their reporting forms, if they are not sure of the funding that is available, but it is not an on-site position. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I understand it is not an on-site position, but you want to have support. It is just not all about funding. It is supporting the daycares to do the job properly for our youth. So, again, I have a concern that it is only a half-time position, but I am going to move on to another topic. In regard to the \$13-million surplus for the district education authority, does the Minister

have a breakdown that she can share with us? She doesn't have to share it today. Is she able to share with committee to show the breakdown in these areas? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am more than happy to share a breakdown of it. However, I am asking for a little bit of time because the statistics that we have are from 2017-2018. I would rather get some more current stats, for 2018-2019, to be able to provide to the Members. I am just trying to find out when we know when that will be coming. The difficulty is that their fiscal year ends in July, so the data wouldn't be able to be given to the Members until the fall, which is just before. We could provide old information from 2017-2018, which is really outdated, if that is what is desired. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. We could probably find that in the public accounts right now. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Minister keeps on talking to us about \$13 million as a surplus. Now, all of a sudden, we have to wait actually until later on. My question, though, is: if a district education authority has the ability to come up with a plan to utilize the surplus that actually will enhance the education for our youth, can they use that money without getting it clawed back? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The \$13 million that I had stated as a surplus was the surplus from 2017-2018. We are projecting that the fiscal year 2018-2019 actually will have a higher surplus. There were some difficulties with the accounting on some of the education bodies during 2017-2018. That bodies, there was only one in deficit, was actually projecting a surplus in the 2018-2019 because of the adjustments to the accounting, so it is not really reflective. Currently, how it stands, as stated earlier, the authorities are allowed to maintain 7 percent of their surplus, and they have to provide a plan for how they are going to use their surplus funding within the year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I understand in the riding that I represent they already have plan of what they want to allocate the money for. If it is more than 7 percent, does that

mean that they can't do the project; they have to find the money elsewhere? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. To be clear, they can keep the 7 percent. The rest of the surplus, they actually have to give the plan for that much money. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess my next set of questions is just in regards to positions being lost. Right now, we are seeing a decline of 60 students in the Deh Cho, so we are going to see positions being lost. Right now, we are bare bones. You know, when you talk about extraordinary circumstances, that is after. Has the department looked at setting up to look at these situations where we are going to lose 60 students and it is going to have an impact on the education system? Have you looked at it, and are you willing to work with that board to get it to be successful? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The realization that our numbers are declining in enrolments and the struggles that some of the smaller schools would face within that is the reason that I committed to doing a review of the funding formula, so that will impact it, as well. I am more than willing, if not myself because I am pretty busy, we are more than willing to meet with the education council to discuss their needs and a strategy and to look at what their issues are. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Nothing further from Mr. Thompson. Education, Culture and Employment, early childhood and school services, operations expenditure summary, activity total, \$199,473,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Please turn to activity 4, income security. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I note on page 46 that the department is anticipating a \$2.674-million increase in income assistance in the forthcoming fiscal year. Can the Minister describe: is that because of program increases, or is it

because of an increased number of cases? Could she give us some detail? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. \$1.676 million of that is additional funding for clients, the numbers of people accessing, increases in rent and utilities, so forced growth within that; \$3,000 is the 1-percent salary increase for non-unionized employees; and \$989,000 is for the CPI increase for disability and aged allowance, which moved that program from \$300 a month to \$405 a month for seniors and people with disabilities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. What I understand from that answer as I was quickly taking notes is that the increase doesn't take into account that there will be a certain percentage of increase of the number of people collecting income assistance in the next fiscal year? Is that correct? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is not correct. Actually, it does. The \$1.676 million actually increases for additional clientele accessing income support services. I will give examples. In 2015-2016, there was 20,007 people, and that year there was an increase of 1,592, so 2016-2017 it was adjusted to 21,599. Then, at the end of that year, there were an additional 3,283, which in 2017-2018 gave us 24,882. So, each year, we are keeping stats of the numbers, and each year we adjust it based on the actual people who are accessing services and then the forced growth for additional costs for the provision of the services. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am not sure I followed all of that, but I get the general impression there. My next question is: I know the Minister has looked at how income assistance can be reformed, and I think she has tabled, she has revealed anyway, a "what we heard" report. I am wondering whether any of the reforms that she is looking at will have financial costs that will be implemented in the next fiscal year. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In honesty, I've read the initial report from the

NGO and the income support people who we worked with. I had put out a call to Aboriginal governments and to MLAs to provide their feedback for me. There was also a municipal government that wanted to have some input in that, as well, so I have allowed that. I have not, in all honesty, given it a lot of thought. I am desperate for this session to be over because my department knows that, as soon as this session is over, I am tackling that. The idea will be just like what I did with the housing program. I will be looking at short-term, mid-term, and long-term goals, recognizing that we only have a few months left, and so I want to knock off as many of the short-term goals as possible. Then, my hope is that the next Assembly, that MLAs who are here and listening, will actually bring that forward and continue that work. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the detail the Minister was able to provide. In the category of short-term goals, does she anticipate that there will be more spending required in income assistance as part of her reform initiative? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I cannot give a definitive answer because I have not really spent too much time to look at it. I am assuming that probably not, being based that we just put in \$1.676 million in this budget for the additional forced growth that we are using. I am hoping that we are looking at different methods, really focusing on our productive choices, how people are using it, payment plans, things that are easier versus just increasing income support. I think personally that increasing income support is not the answer; it's actually working with people so that they are not independent, I know people like to use that, but semi-dependent, so that we can actually recognize their work and their productive choices. I think it's a combination of things, but I don't see it actually being extra monies at this time because we have the \$1.676 million already allocated. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you to the Minister. One of the things that I hear about income assistance is that healthcare is not covered for people who are using the productive choice option for treatment or counselling outside of the home, for those kinds of options. Can the Minister confirm that that's the case, and is there any thought to changing that? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have asked my staff, and, at this point, they do not know, but they both look bewildered. I can commit that, when we get that, childcare and the productive choices should be included. If a person only has a short appointment or the person is coming in, we need to look at that, but, if people are going to regular appointments, they need to be provided childcare supports for that. Yes, it is something I am definitely going to take heed of, and I would appreciate if the MLA could put that in her comments so that it can actually remind me. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Okay, yes. Thank you. I am pleased to do that, and I will have other comments, as well. I have nothing further on this section. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you. In regards to productive choices, we are talking about that, would the ability for somebody to upgrade, would they be able to do that through this program? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, yes, productive choices includes things like training, upgrading, and education. Health, wellness, volunteering in the community, and paid work, those are all included in productive choice. Of course, the whole idea is to promote wellness. I know people say "self-sufficiency," but I say "combined sufficiency" so that people will get the best of their abilities, not to just stay that they are going to get kicked off the system but that they will obtain the best that they can. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: You can see where I am going with this. If they live in a small community, would they be able to apply and access income support, but they have to move into one of the larger centres to access where the learning centres are? Would they be able to do that? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, there is a human right in Canada that

talks about the freedom of mobility of people, so we try not to penalize. We do not tell people that, if you are getting income support, you have to stay in Yellowknife. We do allow mobility of people. Then, of course, if they go out of the jurisdiction, then they may have to apply to a different province. Also, if they are only going for a treatment centre, then, of course, we would pay for that. If they leave the territories for a year or whatever the regulation is, then we have to look at that. However, we do support that through our productive choices and also through our student financial assistance. We have fairly lucrative student financial assistance in terms of grants, remissible loans, and then extra money for Indigenous people, as well. We try to help people as best as possible. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The thing is, though, I don't want for them to liquidate all of their SFA to do upgrading. What I am looking through is if income support allows the person to go from their small community to a centre. I'm not talking going down south. I am talking about moving like to Fort Liard from Nahanni Butte, which has a learning centre there so they can access the program, so they get income support, which will also help them provide for food and accommodations there. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The idea of the income support through the productive choices is to provide people the support so that they can prosper as they define "wellness," but, again, income support is for basic needs. If people are looking for education, they may need to combine the two programs together. They may need to combine that with the student financial assistance, if they qualify, and then sometimes people do need to be topped up with that, with income support. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, when we are talking about basic needs, we are talking about accommodations and food. Correct? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Basic needs are accommodations, food, clothing, and incidentals. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, if I sent you client A, who has come to me and said he wants to upgrade, does not want to access his SFA, and he comes to one of the people in your department and says, "This is what I want to do. I want to go to Fort Liard to do the upgrade," is that something that your department would be willing to look at and allow the people to apply for accessing that program? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's really hard to work off of an example, but the key that I heard there is that the person does not want to apply for SFA. Income support is not meant to be an option. It is meant to meet your basic needs when there are no options. The first priority would be to talk to that individual and say, "Do you qualify?" Like, "Why aren't you getting SFA?" The whole goal of income support isn't so that people can just sit home and collect a cheque. That is not the goal. It is, when people have no other resources, that is when we step in. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Okay, thank you, Mr. Chair. In other words, individual A has to go ask for SFA first, and, if he doesn't, then he has to get income support. Correct? Is that what I am understanding from the Minister? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Every individual is different, so, if they are looking at it, what I would recommend is to go in into the service centre and talk to an income support worker, who would actually give them the guidance to provide the best option for accessing whatever choices they make. It is really difficult to work on a hypothetical situation when I don't even know what I am dealing with or it is just individual A and he doesn't want to get SFA but wants to get income support. That, in my opinion, is not good enough. I would be asking that person, as a client service officer, "What are your options for accessing money?" In SFA, I mean that is a requirement. It talks about it. When you fill out an application for student financial assistance, it does ask you, "What other resources do you have?" Income support, as well, when you apply for income support, it is not just: here is your cheque. It is, "What other resources, what other income, do you

have?" I think that needs to be looked at. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We are going to go round and round in circles here because once she said we could apply for it. I am going to have to go to my constituents and say, "Here is an option. You may have to use your SFA," so I thank the Minister for her time. No further questions.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am just under the Seniors' Home Heating Subsidy. It is starting to be a concern from elders that there is a change to the program. It used to be a certain amount of litres, the fuel, and it is now changed to the actual, a similar number but a dollar amount. What is the cause of this change? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The funding for the Seniors' Home Heating Subsidy was actually reviewed last year, and we made some changes. We found that there was no consistency across the board, so we looked at the ridings. We tried to do it based on the market baskets in other departments. It did change some of the zones in the communities. Some of the communities actually got more money, and some actually got a little bit less because, in my opinion, it is a lot more expensive to provide home heating fuel in Tsiigehtchic than it is in Hay River. That is my personal opinion. I would have to have proof on that.

Then the other concern that was brought up by people is that they wanted to actually have the payouts because people were supplementing. It was only in litres. A lot of people are using wood heat in the smaller communities, and so it was actually felt that it wasn't equitable in that system. However, in saying that, this was the first year we did that, and I am hearing that there are some concerns, so my commitment was made that, after this winter season is done, which will be right after session, then we are going to be doing an evaluation of the program again to make sure that it is meeting the needs of people the best we can. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The way it was before, like in my riding, I will just speak to my

riding, it was working well. I believe it was six cords or over 3,000 litres of fuel, and it seemed to work perfectly. Since this change, there have been a number of concerns coming up. For my riding, I think we would prefer what it used to be rather than what it is now. Will the Minister look at changing it back to what it was for especially the North, where we have the highest cost of living? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My commitment is to look at them and to actually get feedback from as many people. I have concerns, as well. I mean I often worry about giving people cash and then, you know, Christmas comes, and: do I put home heating or do I buy Christmas presents? That is my opinion, and so it would be totally inappropriate to do this based off of my opinion. When we do the evaluation, we will be looking for input from all regions, probably Aboriginal governments and staff and a number of people, to try to find out what is the best solution. The ideal, again, income support is a supplementary program. It is not meant to cover all the needs of all people. Within that, we need to make sure that we are providing it in the best way possible, so we will be reviewing it all, and I have heard the Member. He said, "I like it better with putting it back to the litres," so I have heard you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you. I know the Minister has said they will review it, but will they make the changes is what we are getting at. It is good to review, but, if you are not going to make the changes, then there is no sense of reviewing it. If the Minister is willing to make changes, then that is good with me. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I come from a non-profit world, and I am not known for -- I mean, I do it. I do the action plans and frameworks and stuff, but I am big on getting action, so when I say I am reviewing stuff, it is because I think we need changes, and so my commitment is to actually doing the changes necessary so that people get the best support possible. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Education, Culture and Employment, income security, operations expenditure summary, total activity, \$51,843,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Please turn to activity 5, labour development and advanced education, beginning on page 49. This is our final activity. Comments or questions? Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we touched on this point before, but I feel a need to go over it on this page. I understood the Minister to say that some of the money that was paying for the new ADM came from the Aurora College fund, and we also know that there were cuts to programs at Aurora College for the Social Work Program and the Teachers' Education Program, and yet the budget doesn't reflect those decreases in spending. Can the Minister explain why that is the case? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The programs for the Social Work Program and the teachers, those were put on hold. We are reviewing them. We have not taken the money away from those programs. Aurora College still has the funding for those. We have not lowered the funding. They are still getting \$32 million a year, so that money is still in place, and, of course, they can use that as needed. The other part was that we had a person that was in a position, and we bumped them up to acting, so we actually have additional staffing monies for that, as well. We are not worried. We do feel that we have the money to provide for the salary.

Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. My deputy minister reinforced that, as we do the implementation plan, as we need money, then we will be coming back with that, so, at this point, we do not see the additional need for monies for that position. If I am wrong, I am willing to make a business case and to approach Cabinet, but, at this point, we are not seeing it. When the implementation plan is done, at that point, through that process, we will see the need for additional funds provided to the polytechnic university. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This isn't making total sense to me. Let's take the Social Work Program. It is my understanding that there is no staff left at the Social Work Program, so I am unclear why those salaries would be budgeted into the next fiscal year. It looks like the effect of this is to create a slush fund that will be sort of unplugged to actual need in the next fiscal year and, in fact, for the foreseeable future, because we don't know

when or if the Social Work Program is coming back. Can the Minister provide a rationale for continuing to allocate money to salaries, when there is no one to fill the positions and there is no advertising to fill those positions, because there is no program? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The decision was made not to take the funding away, because we know that we are moving into a polytechnic university, and my commitment on the floor was that those two programs would be the first ones to be reviewed once we do the evaluation. Those positions are still here in the mains. The people in those positions are not there. They have been transferred, or they have gotten other jobs, but the positions still remain, and that money is actually not being spent until the polytechnic action plan is decided upon. We haven't taken the money away. The people have left, but the money is still there for those positions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I get that the money is still here. I just am questioning, as a budgeting practice, budgeting for a program that doesn't exist. There is X amount of money for these instructors that is not being taken up. The effect of that is there is this money dedicated to a program that no longer exists. I don't understand why the Minister is retaining this money. The whole point of this exercise was for Aurora College to save money. The staff are all gone; there is the possibility of saving the money, and yet, the money is still here for a program that, at this point, doesn't have a start date. I just can't follow the logic of it. If she could speak to me about that, please? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Originally, the direction was, if we were leaving those positions, to take the money away. It was a decision that was not favourable, and so we stopped that, and we said, "No, Aurora College will still get the same amount of funding." They have a lot of work to do, Mr. Chair. They need to develop an implementation plan. They need to do an evaluation. They need to look at the programs. That money will still be needed.

When we give funding to all of the schools, we give funding based on enrolment or based on teachers needed or other factors considered, but we don't prescribe what any of the education authorities is

actually going to do, down to what your janitor buys or what you implement. That is why we have education bodies to actually do that work. We provide \$32 million to Aurora College, and that money is still there for Aurora College to move into the polytechnic university. They can use that as they deem necessary. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: I am starting to get a little clearer here now. The money is not for the Social Work Program; it is for the development and implementation of the polytechnic university. Do I have that right now? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The money is provided to Aurora College for the implementation of their programs as they, Aurora College, deem fit. Now, as we move into the polytechnic university, the person that is responsible for that will use that funding as that person deems fit to provide for the best services for students and to meet the needs of residents and businesses in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess the only thing that I find surprising is that money is allocated for one purpose and used for another. That doesn't seem to be sound business practice, even for an arm's-length organization. I am wondering why that is. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, we provide that money to Aurora College as a contribution and to use as they see fit. They have to provide us an annual report on what they have done with that, but to date, we have never been so prescriptive for the GNWT to say, "You will provide this program, that program, this program, that program." That has always been the autonomy of the post-secondary education.

I am open to feedback if committee thinks that I should be directing the college on what we are doing, but I do think that having that autonomy is the right way to move within our post-secondary education and all education systems. What is the use of decentralizing if we are going to prescribe, "This is you will do with every single cent?" The whole purpose is to actually have the people in the regions or in Aurora College to be able to define

how they use their funding to meet their best needs as they deem fit. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I realize that the decision to cut the programs was not made by this Minister, but I find the conversation of autonomy somewhat galling. The college was directed to cut those programs, and they did that. While I appreciate the Minister championing the independence and integrity of Aurora College, the fact is that they have been taking orders from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment for a long time, and we have several studies that show that that is the case. I guess I am still trying to reconcile, "They are a fully autonomous organization," with the evidence that we have that is to the contrary. I realize that there is a lot of this that needs to be worked out in governance, but let me just say that I am a big fan of budgeting where you call the rent "the rent," you call the utilities "the utilities." You don't call the Social Work Program "implementation of a polytechnic university"; you call it what it is. I leave those comments with the Minister. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, I am not a big fan of doing budgeting, either. That is not based on some kind of research, calling the utilities, checking what the enrolments were, checking what the needs are. I am going to make the assumption that Aurora College has done that all themselves. We give them the money as a contribution agreement. They provide their budget and then their annual reports as they deem fit. That has been a luxury. The government response says that we are only going to work with them for a couple of years, and the whole focus is to get them independent, because that is a big critique, that we are too entrenched in them. That is why I have committed to working with them and not doing the implementation plan before I hired the right person. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. We need to get a clock at that witness table there. Next, we have Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I apologize to my colleagues here for being late. I think the understanding is well-received on the airplane electrical problems of yesterday. Anyways, I am here, and I am not sure if it fits this detail here, but if I can be allowed a little bit of flexibility here on my question about resource availability for funding programs or funding for the education system for the Sahtu region on review and efficiencies.

When I look at some of the concerning numbers of our youth's graduation rate, last year, in two of the five communities, there were zero graduates, and looking at the last five years, from kindergarten to 12, we are looking at about 50 percent, and the national average is about 70. The territorial average is around 55, 57. I think that this should issue a red flag and raise the question with the Sahtu Divisional Board of Education if there is funding available for this fiscal coming year on efficiency review on why our graduation rates aren't higher. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. This is not the correct section, but better late than never, Mr. McNeely. If the Minister is willing, I will allow the line of questioning. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Absolutely. I am allowing the MLA to ask me the question, and I will go to it remembering that he owes me. The graduation rates, yes, it is an issue. What are we doing about it? That is why we are bringing in the child and youth counsellors, to actually provide some mental health support. Mental health support isn't about just: are you okay? If you don't feel good about yourself, you're not going to stay in school, so that's part of the answer. We have the specialized teams that we're going to be sending out to work with people. The distance education in the smaller communities is working. We're expanding on that. Then, our new pathways, our career counsellors, are part of that as well, to try to actually get those students before they drop out.

However, I have to say that it takes a community to raise a child, and one of the biggest things that I'm also noticing is that students are not there. If they miss one day a week, by the end of the year, the amount of learning that they've missed is huge. We need to work with communities, as well. Education has to do our part, but we also need to work with communities, Aboriginal governments, municipal governments, parents, whatever community supports, and try to get kids to attend classes, and that should see some more positive results. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair, and thanks for the reply here. I didn't hear an answer to my question of whether there are going to be resources available to do a review on why the declining numbers are for graduates. Are there resources available in this budget to do an operational review, and looking at the Education Act, as well? I'm under the impression that there's supposed to be an operational educational plan for each school, and I'm not too sure if that is done, so that could make up a part of the review to see if

there's an operational plan. The question is: are there resources available to have a regional educational efficiency and review with the leadership of the Sahtu, say SSI, and the department getting together and review together the operation plans, the graduations rates, and why they're declining? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Every district or education body actually has to have an operational plan. It's not an operational plan that we do as Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Each educational body does their operational plan. We don't currently have money within our budget to actually do a regional review of the Sahtu. In fairness, if I did one, I'd have to do all of the regions because that's how I operate. I can speak to the education council, and if the council is willing, then I don't see any reason why they wouldn't meet with their leadership. If the council sees that as deemed necessary, then, by all means, I would support it, but we don't have extra funding within our budget to provide that to one region or all regions at this point. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm glad to hear that the Minister is willing to look at it and work with the regional council. If the Minister could work with me as well, to include me as part of the deliberation toward the reviews? As I mentioned, I'm quite concerned about the graduation rates being zero in a couple of communities, and I'm not too sure this fiscal year, or this curricular year, what we're going to have. If we're trying to deliver a high rate of education, the numbers of zero should raise a red flag, and step back, and we should look at the review. I look forward to working with the Minister on a potential internal-resourced funded review. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Does the Minister care to comment?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Just a quick comment. Just to say that graduation rates, sometimes, it not just that the students don't graduate. In some of the smaller communities, there are actually no students in those higher grades for various reasons. We have a community with five students, period. Those are the realities of some of the schools that we're dealing with. It's not always because they just don't get through. Sometimes, the cohort of children aged is not at that time yet. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Yes, Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think, in this case, we do have some children in there, looking back at some of the numbers here. Take Fort Good Hope, for example: there were zero graduates. The year before that, in 2017, there were four; in 2016, there were three; in 2015, there were two; and in 2014, there were six, so there are students out there. We just need to include that as part of the review and seeing why our students aren't graduating. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If the education authority council is willing to take part in that review, we will support him. Again, financially, we do not have the resources in the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to do that in one region or all regions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Next, I have Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you. I'd just like to follow up on some questions from Ms. Green here that she proposed to the Minister. The Minister talks about the college being autonomous. Can you give me the definition of what "autonomous" means? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. The Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. "Autonomous," I'm not going to look it up in a dictionary. Maybe my staff. If you really want that, I can get it to you. The reality is that we provide Aurora College \$32 million in a contribution agreement. When we did the review, the review stated out very clearly that they felt that Education, Culture and Employment was too entrenched in the college, and it said they need to be arm's length. They need to have their own autonomy to find what they want, grow up.

The government response came back and said that we will be; Education, Culture and Employment will take it over until we can give them the skills so that they can be autonomous, be on their own, arm's length with our support. My humble definition of "autonomous" it's what they need to be. It's not where they are now, although I just met with the new associate deputy minister today, very short. We're meeting again tomorrow. It was the first thing I talked about, was: use us, use the GNWT for a couple of years, as short as you need to, all the supports you need, but the goal is to be on your own. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Next, I have Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: My understanding, they're not autonomous right now. They're part of the department. We've hired somebody. How does the budget work? How does their budget work? Do they just come to you with a number and say, "We want \$32 million," and you guys go out and give a contribution agreement? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. The Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Historically, we've given them \$32 million. I don't know when the last increase was. I imagine they'd negotiate certain times. What their commitment is right now is they have \$32 million to use as they deem fit. As they do the implementation plan, if there is more money necessary, then, they'll bring it forward to us. Again, Dr. Weegar was already talking about not being so reliant on government, looking at other ways of getting funds such as research, et cetera. Until that implementation plan is done, until the doctor has some time to figure out which way is up, it will stay as it is. Then, the commitment is, when he does that implementation plan and needs more money, we'll be looking at resourcing that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We went to them and told them to make cuts, so we, as government and the Department of Education, told them to make a cut. They've proposed these two things to cut. Now, you're telling me that the money is still there. We've seen the college. They did a review of the social work program, and they said, this is what we need to do to fix it. So why didn't we just say, "Okay, fix it and still implement it?"

It's funny because we're sitting here saying they're autonomous. They're not really autonomous, because we've got to give them two years now. We've told them that we have to make a cut, and then they cut two programs, and then they evaluated one. They went out and evaluated the social work program, and they come out and you're going, "No, that's not good enough." We've got to re-evaluate it. To me, that's not being autonomous. It's saying, if you don't listen to big dad or mom, this is what's going to happen. I struggle with what we're saying. Why don't we just say that this is what we're doing? We're going to fix it the way we like it, and that's the end of it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Absolutely right. When we were looking at funding, I wasn't the Minister then. I am guessing that it was told that you need to find some savings, and Aurora College came and said, "These are the programs that we are getting rid of because they are not cost-effective." It was not ECE. It was Aurora College that originally said that they are not cost-effective.

In the meantime, they are doing a review. I am not sure who did that review. I am not sure if it was the administration that approved that review, because, at the time that it came out, the person who was in charge of that ship had resigned. That review came out without the president actually putting a stamp of approval on it.

I am a social worker by degree, and I see the need for it. My commitment in this House is: I don't want to see a program where students are set up to fail, where students are taking third- and fourth-year courses in their first year. You can never make the honour roll, unless you are really, really super intelligent to get that done. I want to see a college or post-secondary that actually has the first and second years' general studies, like any other post-secondary in the country, where students can get all of that, and then they can actually expand and take earlier. We left the money in there because the political will of all of us was to actually provide the supports. We know that we want to do better. We know that it needs to grow. We have left the money there, that they can use as they deem fit, and then, as they develop their implementation plan, if they need money, and when they need money, at that point, we will be looking at it.

However, I don't feel that it is appropriate for me to go in and say, "This is what you are going to do with your \$32 million." I think that that is a step back. I do not think that that is progressive at all. I think that we need to work towards supporting them, so that they can have our support and not feel intimidated and, within the next few years, can actually be autonomous and actually define their own. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you. I appreciate the Minister's passion from that, but when I talked to the board, the former board that is no longer out there, it wasn't the college. It was the department that told them, "You have to cut, and here's where you have to cut."

You have your opinion, and we have another opinion from other people. My concern is: how do we know that this system is going to work this time? The old system didn't work, and we have a college

that has \$32 million and has no real plan. Did we just give them a contribution agreement because it is what we gave them in the past? What are we doing to make sure that this time it is going to work? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My hope is that the reason it is going to work is because they are going to look from the foundation up. They are going to have a solid game plan. One of the next things that we are doing currently, along with the visioning exercise, is implementing two boards, not just a board with representatives from regions, as our old board was, which was nice. We need a board that has the skills, hopefully regional. One is around governance, how Aurora College is governed. The other board that we are looking at is an advisory board around programs, an advisory board that talks about best practices around the country, and that board will not only be defined within the territories; that is looking at people throughout the country to provide that support.

How will I know that it is going to be different? This time, we are going to have two boards, one directly specializing in best practices of programming for university, colleges, polytechs. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the Minister's passion and drive, and I am hoping that she is right, but we hear about government costs and that. Now we are going to add a second board? Is this not going to cost more money to the system, or are we able to do that with the \$32 million that we have right now? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. At this point, like I said, we don't know what the costs are. That is part of the process. We know that we are committed to doing this. This was agreed in the government report.

If Members think that they know the best for how we should be doing this, I am willing to take their feedback, and I will provide that to the associate deputy minister, who does have the credentials to actually move this forward, but I don't think that it is appropriate for us on this floor to be actually defining how the polytechnic university moves forward. We have hired a person to do that, and we are looking at an expert team to actually provide those

services. Although, if people feel they have the expertise, I am more than willing. If they want to write me a letter, I will provide that to the associate deputy minister. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson, your time has expired. Education, Culture and Employment, labour development and advanced education, operations expenditures summary, activity total, \$53,135,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. At the back of this section, there are a number of information items, which we have largely discussed already, so we will just move back to the departmental total on page 29. Education, Culture and Employment, total department, \$332,121,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Does committee agree that this concludes our consideration of Education, Culture and Employment?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Thank you to the Minister and to the witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, you may escort the witnesses from the Chamber. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that the Chair rise and report progress. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. There is a motion to report progress. The motion is in order. The motion is not in order until the witnesses have left the floor. My apologies, and once the Minister takes her seat, we can continue with the vote. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed?

---Carried

I will rise and report progress. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: May I have the report, Member for Hay River North?

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 322-18(3), Main Estimates 2019-2020, and would like to report progress, and Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Do we have a seconder? Member for Range Lake. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed?

---Carried

Masi. Item 22, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Wednesday, March 6, 2019, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgments
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to the Commissioner's Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 26, Statistics Act
 - Bill 31, Northwest Territories 911 Act
 - Committee Report 12-18(3), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2018 Report of the Auditor General of Canada on

Northwest Territories Child and Family Services

- Committee Report 13-18(3), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of Bill 31: Northwest Territories 911 Act
- Minister's Statement 131-18(3), Sessional Statement
- Minister's Statement 151-18(3), New Federal Infrastructure Agreement
- Minister's Statement 158-18(3), Developments in Early Childhood Programs and Services
- Tabled Document 322-18(3), Main Estimates, 2019-2020

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Masi, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, March 6, 2019, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:48 p.m.